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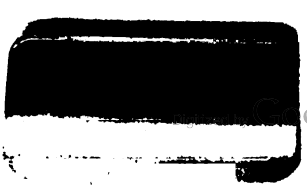

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"AS DAVID AND THE SIBYLS SAY"

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"AS DAVID AND THE SIBYLS SAY"

A SKETCH OF THE SIBYLS AND THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

INITIATED AND PROJECTED BY THE LATE
VERY REVEREND ALFRED CANON WHITE

COLLECTED TOGETHER AND CONCLUDED (AT HIS REQUEST)

BY MARIANA MONTEIRO

"Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also."—ROM. iii. 29.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

SANDS & CO.
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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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[*To face Preface.*

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PREFACE

SOME twenty years ago, the late Canon White, when reciting the sequence in the Mass for the Dead, the *Dies Iræ*, conceived the idea that a book on the Sibyls would prove an interesting work. He spoke to me about the scheme, desiring me to collect the materials for this work when I frequented the Reading-room of the British Museum. As, fortunately, I am conversant with several languages, and, moreover, accustomed to work of research, I gladly seconded his wishes to gather from many sources the necessary information. The Canon had in mind to draw with his accustomed skill twelve sketches of the Sibyls, each with the attributes in accordance with their prophecies.

When engaged in this research, I found that some authors had formed the idea that these Sibyls were no more than a class of mythical

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beings which had had no existence, and not real prophets sent by God. This idea is quite erroneous; and, similarly to many other errors, has been ignorantly circulated. Not only has Plato, Virgil, and other pagan writers who existed before the coming of Christ, and of undoubted veracity, spoken and described them as real women endowed with the gift of prophecy by God Himself, but some twenty-two of the holy Fathers of the Church and the earliest writers of authority during the first ages of Christianity, mention and speak of the Sibyls as women prophets, whom, on account of their virginity, God had endowed with the gift of prophecy, and sent them to the Gentiles lest they should ever allege as an excuse that God had only favoured the Jews, His chosen people, by sending them prophets to announce the redemption of the human race through the Passion, Cross, and Death of His only Son, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity. Hence God in His tender mercy sent these Sibyls to the Gentiles to announce to them also the glorious tidings of Salvation.

In the days when I was collecting and writing out this work, Canon White used to come to the Reading-room occasionally to superintend and

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look over the various works I had found relating to the Sibyls, and was very much struck with one which contained illustrations of the twelve Sibyls. This work was in French and Latin, published in 1586, fol.: *Sibyllarum duodecim: Les Oracles des douze Sibyls, Lat. & French.* These I have had reproduced, and they will be found in the present work. He also copied many of the Latin verses which will be also found in this work. The greater portion of the information I gathered from foreign books, for the English writers do not seem to have taken much interest in this subject, no doubt because it would entail too much research; for in this age of hurry and money-making, work is not done for the sake of love of art, science, or literature, but for what it will bring quickly to the author or publisher.

I had then arrived at the part where I commenced the Sibylline Oracles themselves, or what has remained of them, translated from the Greek, when I had suddenly to leave England and proceed to Portugal, leaving the work uncompleted. My stay abroad proved of some length, and on my return, on asking the Canon about the book —for I had left all the materials with him—he replied that he had done nothing further after I left.

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Canon White's appointment to the Rectorship of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brook Green, took place about that time; and no doubt the many duties which this appointment involved, together with the enormous work of beautifying the splendid Church, took up all his available leisure, and put all thought of the Sibyls away from his mind. I have no need to mention here what various and splendid work he did, and how his duties and fervent zeal in the service of his Divine Master completely absorbed his time. This is well known, and a matter which does not require my feeble words to enhance.

After the lamented death and funeral of our beloved Canon Alfred White, I received from the Reverend Father Grant, who had been the Canon's assistant priest for many years, a letter of which I give the copy. It runs as follows :—

"41 Brook Green, W.,
May 2, 1904.

"Dear Miss Monteiro,

"Our dear Canon White, just before his death, asked me to look out his manuscripts and designs on the Sibyls, and he wished them sent to you, as he thought you might complete

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the work and bring it out. I have just found them after a great search. Shall I send them over to you? or would you prefer coming here first to see them? We are all in great grief here. Pray for us, and believe me,—Yours truly in Christ,

RODERICK GRANT."

It is in compliance with the Canon's dying request that I have continued and brought to a conclusion this work, which I have had printed and published at my own sole expense. I have no doubt that the Canon's many friends whom he left sorrowing will be glad to possess copies of this book on a most interesting subject, and one scarcely ventured upon in the English language.

At end of book will be found the sketches done by Canon White himself, and reproduced just as he left them. At the part where the life of each Sibyl is given, a full-page illustration will be seen of the corresponding Sibyl. These, as I said before, have been photographed from the French and Latin book above mentioned, and are the designs which he had so much admired.

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In the Museum, I found other foreign illustrated books on the Sibyls, but none of them appealed to the Canon's artistic taste as this one did. In arranging and bringing this work to a conclusion, I have endeavoured to carry out as faithfully as I could the scheme and plan of the work as he had laid out, for which reason I have omitted none of the Latin verses, which he himself had copied with the object of including them in the book, and, on receiving from Father Grant the parcel of MSS., I found that the whole had been type-written and arranged as it occurs in the present issue.

The cover of the book is likewise Canon White's design, found among the sketches done by his hand, and coloured. It has been my desire to bring out this book on the Sibyls in time for the first anniversary of Canon White's saintly and glorious death. Glorious in the sight of God! as the last tribute of my respect and veneration which I could offer him, who, for the length of thirty-six years, had watched and guided me, through many difficult and bitter trials, with a prudent and safe hand. Now in death I lay in spirit this book at his feet; and as I firmly believe that he is in the enjoyment of the heavenly rewards promised to such as lead a noble, labori-

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ous, and well-spent life, I pray to him to accept this labour of love, with all its deficiencies and blemishes, and to plead for me at the throne of mercy. To such of his friends and other readers who may peruse this book, I say to them,

Vale! Et ora pro me!

MARIANA MONTEIRO.

ST SCHOLASTICA'S RETREAT,
CLAPTON, N.E.,
Feast of the Annunciation,
March 1905.

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TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE VERY REV. CANON WHITE. *In six pages, at end of book, but before the Index.*

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SEQUENCE SAID AT MASS FOR THE DEAD

Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favilla ;
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando judex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus !

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

Mors stupebit et natura,
Cum resurget Creatura,
Judicanti responsura.

Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.

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Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.

Quid sum, miser! tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.

Rex tremendæ majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuæ viæ,
Ne me perdas illa die.

Quærens me, sedisti lassus;
Redemisti, crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Juste Judex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis,
Ante diem rationis.

Ingemisco, tanquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus,
Supplicanti parce Deus.

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Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meæ non sunt dignæ.
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.

Inter oves locum præsta,
Et ab hœdis me sequestra.
Statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis:
Gere curam mei finis.

Lacrymosa dies illa,
Qua resurget ex favilla,
Judicandus homo reus.

Huic ergo parce Deus,
Pie Jesu, Domine,
Dona eis requiem. Amen.

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Translation

The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
Shall the whole world in ashes lay,
As David and the Sibyls say.
What horror will invade the mind,
When the strict Judge, who would be kind,
Shall have few venial faults to find!
The last loud trumpet's wondrous sound
Must through the rending tombs rebound,
And wake the nations under ground.

Nature and Death shall, with surprise,
Behold the pale offender rise,
And view the Judge with conscious eyes.
Then shall, with universal dread,
The sacred mystic book be read,
To try the living and the dead.
The Judge ascends His awful throne:
He makes each secret sin be known,
And all with shame confess their own.

Oh then! what interest shall I make,
To save my last important stake,
When the most just have cause to quake?
Thou mighty, formidable King!
Thou Mercy's unexhausted spring!
Some comfortable pity bring!

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Forget not what my ransom cost,
Nor let my dear-bought soul be lost,
In storms of guilty terror toss'd.

Thou, who for me didst feel such pain,
Whose precious Blood the Cross did stain;
Let not those agonies be vain.
Thou, whom avenging powers obey,
Cancel my debt (too great to pay)!
Before the sad accounting day.
Surrounded with amazing fears,
Whose load my soul with anguish bears,
I sigh, I weep: accept my tears.

Thou, who wast moved with Mary's grief,
And, by absolving of the thief
Hast given me hope, now give relief.
Reject not my unworthy prayer,
Preserve me from the dangerous snare,
Which Death and gaping Hell prepare.
Give my exalted soul a place
Among the chosen right-hand race,
The sons of God, and heirs of Grace.

From that insatiate abyss,
Where flames devour and serpents hiss,
Promote me to thy seat of bliss.

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Prostrate my contrite heart I rend,
My God, my Father, and my Friend!
Do not forsake me in my end.
Well may they curse their second birth,
Who rise to a surviving death.
Thou great Creator of mankind,
Let guilty man compassion find.

Amen.

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"AS DAVID AND THE SIBYLS SAY"

FIRST SIBYL

Sibilla Persica

"Chara Dei soboles nascetur Virgine Matre,
Et lapsæ Genti causa salutis erit.
Ipse triumphator Solymas pervadet asello
Nudis tandem egressis ultima fata feret."

The Sibyl Persica was a native of Persia, a region of Oriental Asia called Persia from King Perse or Perseo. Her proper name was Sambetha, and mention is made of her by Nicanor, the historian of Alexander the Great. This Sibyl is called by some Persica, by others Chaldea, and by others again, Helrea, as is affirmed by Genebrado, who says: her father was Beroso, he who wrote the Chaldean History; and her mother was Erimanta. St Augustine

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and Lactantius Firmianus speak in particular of this Sibyl to whom is commonly attributed the following prophecy:—

"Ecce bestiam conculcaberis et gignetur Dominus in orbe terrarum, et gremium virginis erit salus gentium et pedes ejus in valetudine hominum, et invisibile verbum palpabitur."

She flourished in the time of Gideon of the tribe of Manasses, about the year 2769 B.C. There are also found of this Sibyl some verses which treat of the preaching and baptism of St John, and of the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, with which Our Lord fed the five thousand people in the desert, there remaining twelve baskets of bread, as is described by the Evangelists. This Sibyl is depicted, according to the treatise *De Vaticiniis Sibilarum*, clothed in a robe of gold brocade and a white veil over her head. Others paint her with a book of her prophecies in the right hand, and the left placed on her breast, the heavens illumined with a Cross in the centre of the light; because she, more than all the other Sibyls, treated largely of the Coming, Cross, and Death of Christ Our Lord, for which reason she wrote eighty-four books of prophecies and notable events, as she lived a long time.

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SIBILLA PERSICA.

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Concerning the preaching and baptism of the precursor, St John the Baptist, are found the following verses, which, translated from the Greek, run thus :—

"Tunc quoque vox quædam veniet per deserta locorum.
Nuncia mortales miseros quæ clamet ad omnes
Ut vectos faciant calles animosque ; repurgent
A vitiis, et aquis lustrentur corpora mundis," etc.

That is: when the time predicted shall come in which the Redeemer is to come into the world, the sound of a voice will be heard in the deserts, and that voice will invite all mortals to prepare the way, and cleanse their souls of vices and sins, and they will be baptised in pure and limpid waters.

This prophecy is in harmony with what St John writes: "Ego vox clamantis in deserto: dirigite viam Domini, sicut dixit Isaias Propheta."

This Sibyl is held in much veneration by the ancient and modern writers, not only because she was the first of the Sibyls, as that she spoke much concerning Christ Our Lord, and because she wrote so many books of prophecies and remarkable events. She was the first among the Sibyls who spoke about the Cross and Death of

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Christ Our Lord, and for that reason she is generally depicted gazing on the heavens illumined around a Cross, because in the Cross and Passion of Christ consists our enlightenment and happiness and the true peace of the soul. The Cross is likewise shown surrounded by this light of heaven to make us understand that the Cross is the ladder by which we are to ascend to heaven, as this Sibyl signifies in her verses. It is the ladder of Jacob; the two sides are the Divinity and Humanity, and the rungs of this ladder are the painful examples given us by Christ Our Lord, because from the Crib to the Cross all the steps were those of trial and poverty. By this ladder do the angels descend, that is to say, the angelic men, by the examples of mortification, and they ascend through contemplation and the elevation of the understanding, hence with good reason is the Sibyl painted with the Cross and heavenly light, since by the Cross of Christ Our Lord we are liberated from the tyranny of death and sin, as is signified by Claudianus, who, imitating the Sibyl, says :—

> "Quin et suppicij nomen nexusque ; subisti,
> Ut nos surriperes letho, mortemq', fugares
> Morte tua."

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SIBILLA LIBICA.

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SECOND SIBYL

Sibilla Libica

This Sibyl is also known by another name, Bybissa or Elisa. She lived before the destruction of Troy about the year 2815. To her is attributed the following prophecy.

"Ecce veniet dies, et illuminabit Dominus condensa tenebrarum, et nexus Synagogæ solventur, et definent labia hominum, cum viderint Regem viventium, et tenebit illum in gremio virgo domina gentium, et regnabit in misericordia, ex utero matris ejus erit statera cunctorum; inde manus iniquæ venient, et dabunt Deo alapas, manibus incertis miserabilis et ignominiosus erit, miserabilibusque ipsum præbebit."

There is also found some verses of this Sibyl, quoted by Sixtus of Siena, which treat upon the miracles that Our Lord performed. That He was to heal the sick and the crippled who should have faith and confidence in Him—that the blind should have their sight restored, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the devils be driven away, and the dead rise again. She also said that God was just towards all men, and was no respecter of persons, a Holy, Living,

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Eternal, Everlasting King, and that He would recline His sacred limbs on the lap and arms of the Queen of Heaven. She is depicted robed in green garments, her head crowned with flowers, and bearing a laurel branch in her hand.

THIRD SIBYL

Sibilla Delphica

She was called by this name because she was born in Delphos, a city of Bœtia, close to the Parnassus. She was daughter of Tyresias and Daphne. Some call her Themis, others Anthemis, and others Sibyla, on which account all the others were called Sibyls. She wrote before the destruction of Troy, and prophesied much of Priam and Hecuba about the union of Paris and Helen. The Romans erected a statue in her honour. Homer took many of her verses for his *Iliad.* She lived about the year 2802 B.C. To her is ascribed the following prophecy:—

"Ipsum tuum cognosce Dominum qui vere' Dei Filius est." And also the following:—

"Nascetur Propheta absque matris coitu ex virgine eius."

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SIBILLA DELPHICA.

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She wrote very carefully concerning the Incarnation of the Divine Word, life and miracles of Christ Our Lord, His betrayal, imprisonment, Passion and shameful death, Resurrection and Ascension, with such good order and style, that it reads more like the records of a past history than the narrative of events which were yet to come.

This is expressed by the author of the *Treatise on the Sibyls*. She is depicted with a closed book, because the mysteries she wrote about were hidden from the people.

Of the Passion of Christ she wrote the following prophecy :—

"Impinget illi colaphos et sputa subrectis
Israel labiis, neque non, et fellis amari
Apponet escam, potumque; immitis aceti."

Which is: The wicked people of Israel will give the Messiah blows, and will spit on His face, and they will give Him gall for His food and vinegar to drink.

Here is also found a prophecy concerning the Virgin Mary quoted by Chrysippus :—

"Qui virginea conceptus ab alvo
Prodidit hæc, sine contactu maris, omnia vincit
Hoc naturæ opera."

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FOURTH SIBYL

Sibilla Cumana

She was a native of Cumæ, a city of Asia Minor, and is a different Sibyl from the one called Cumea, who was of Cimerio, a town of Campania. This Sibyl was also called Amalthea, others call her Heropila or Herophile or Demophile.

On the summit of the city of Cumæ is seen a chapel which is said to have been the cave or dwelling of the Sibyl who flourished in the time of Tarquin the Elder, about the year 3364 B.C. Of her it is said, that on approaching the presence of Tarquin with nine books of her prophecies, she demanded for them the price of three hundred gold coins, and as this sum appeared to the king to be excessive, he refused to purchase them. Then the Sibyl in his presence burnt three of the books, and asked for the remaining ones the same price as before. The king scoffed at her demand and pretensions, and the Sibyl in his presence burnt three more of the books, and demanded the same price for the three books as she had done for the nine. The king was greatly surprised, and marvelled at her demands, and as

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SIBILLA CUMANA.

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it appeared to him that these books must contain some great mystery, he acceded, and gave her for the three the sum she asked. Pliny says that there were three books, and that she burnt two; these were held in such esteem that the Romans placed them in the Capitol, and they sent to search for all the verses they could find of this Sibyl and of the other Sibyls, and they appointed fifteen persons to whom were entrusted the custody of these books, and the priests who guarded them were called Sibylines, as Cicero tells us: Nec hoc quidem in mentem veniebat Sybilino Sacerdoti. These books were so highly esteemed that, when Stilicon the Tyrant, governor of Rome, burnt these books, there was nothing the Romans felt so much as this cruel act, as is sung by the poet Rutilus.

Ne tantum patris sævisset proditor arma, sancta Sibyllæ fata cremavit opus; of her we have the following prophecy:—

"Mortis fatum finiet trium dierum somno suscepto, tunc a mortuis egressus, ad lucem lætam veniet, primus resurrectionis initium ostendens."

There are found some verses of this Sibyl in praise of the Virgin, our Lady, in which it says, that she was most humble, for which reason she

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was chosen to be the Mother of God, as the Virgin herself confesses to her cousin Saint Elizabeth, when she said: "Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ." And the Sibyl says that she was greater than any other in the world. The verses are as follows:—

"(Ut voluit), nostra vestitus carne decenter,
In cunctis humilis; castam pro matre puellam
Diliget; hæc alias forma precesserit omnes."

This Sibyl is depicted holding the book of prophecies in one hand, and in the other the standard of the Cross.

The sepulchre of this Sibyl is said to be preserved in Sicily, according to Marcus Varro and others.

FIFTH SIBYL

Sibilla Europa

Nothing is written of this Sibyl concerning the country nor the time of her fame, hence some authors have not mentioned her nor the following Sibyl, as these hold to be one, the Cumana, Europa, and Cumea.

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SIBILLA EUROPEA.

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The modern writers generally have mentioned her, and we have this prophecy by her.

"Veniet ille, et transibit montes, et colles et latices sylvarum Olympi, regnabit in paupertate, et dominabitur in silencio et egredietur de utero Virginis."

This Sibyl is not the one who married Arterio, king of Crete, nor the daughter of Anthenor who was ravished by Jupiter in the form of a bull, as Ovid untruthfully says, because, as has been already said, the Sibyls were pure, chaste virgins, and the gift of prophecy was communicated to them on account of their gift of virginity. She is depicted looking up to heaven, bearing an olive branch in her hand, her head wrapped with a fine veil, and robed in golden garments.

The language employed by the Sibyl Europa is very similar in style to that of the Spouse in the Canticles. She says: "He will cross the mountains and the hills," and the Spouse says to her beloved: "*Ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, transiliens colles.*"

The Sibyl said that He would reign in poverty, which is in conformity with what the Prophet Zacharias says: "*Exulta satis filia Sion,*" etc.

The Sibyl also predicted that Christ should

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be born of a Virgin, which is also conformable with Isaias: "*Ecce Virgo concipiet*," etc.

Sibylla Europa is generally depicted with an olive branch, to signify that with the coming of Christ would cease the tempest and agitation of Idolatry, and Christ, the fairest Dove, would come announcing peace, as in the time of Noah the Dove had returned carrying an olive branch in its beak to show that the waters of the deluge had subsided. Because Idolatry had been introduced in the world, and the Devil, to confirm the false divinities, found a great success in giving answers through the idols, in order that those who came to consult them should believe that these divinities were the true God. These answers were given in many temples of the idols, and the most remarkable ones were in Dodona, a province of Egypt, where, according to Diodorus Siculus, in the depths of a wooded forest there was a temple dedicated to Jupiter, in which there was an oracle that gave answers. In Delphos there was another temple, close to Mount Parnassus, and this was the most famous of all that were in the world, of which St Fulgentius makes mention, where the Devils gave cautious answers, so that their falsehoods should not be discovered, and thus they spoke

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SIBILLA CUMEA.

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with equivocation and double meaning, as is remarked by St Augustine and by Paul Orosius when speaking of the *ardides* of Apollo in giving replies. The priestesses of Apollo who gave the answers were called Pythonica, from Python, the serpent which was said to have killed Apollo; of these priestesses there were many in the world, as is read of in the Book of Kings, that Saul sought one in order to learn from her the success of the war.

This agitation of the Devils and the replies of the Idols lasted until the coming of Christ Our Lord, who brought the olive branch as a sign that the tempests of Idolatry had passed away.

SIXTH SIBYL

Sibilla Cumea

This Sibyl was from Cimero, a town of Campana in Italy, for which reason she has been called by some Sibylla Italica; others call her Cimeria, and say that she was born in Babylon, and came to Italy, where she dwelt in a cave near Cumas in Italy, and there wrote and dictated many oracles. She used to ascend some high

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place and teach the people, as St Justin tells us; and she left, written in verse, the coming of God to the world, and the miracles He was to work. Of her Virgil speaks when he says:—

> "Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas
> Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo;
> Jam redit et virgo, redeunt saturnia regna,
> Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto,
> Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
> Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
> Casta, fave, Lucina: tuus jam regnat Apollo."

St Augustine, St Justin, Arnobius, St Anthony, and others, say that Virgil had seen the verses of the Sibyl Cumea. Servius Honoratus, the commentator of Virgil, says that this Sibyl divided the ages by metals, and said that after the age of Iron would follow the age of Gold, with the birth of the new Prince. Virgil often speaks of her in various parts of the *Æneid*, as is declared by the interpreters and expositors of Virgil, who all agree that he saw the works and writings of this Sibyl, and placed many of them in his work, particularly those above mentioned, applying them to the birth of Julius Cæsar and his nephew Augustus, the first who took the title of Emperor. And to flatter these Princes he wrote his *Æneid* and the Fourth *Eclogue*, applying to

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them the verses of the Sibyl Cumea, because Virgil was born in the year 3934 B.C., and wrote his *Eclogues* in 3963, when the era of Cæsar was introduced in Spain (also to flatter the Cæsar), and he died in 3985, aged fifty-one years; and Virgil did not speak of the birth of Christ Our Lord as a modern author has said, because Virgil died sixteen years before the birth of Christ, but he made use of the verses of this Sibyl, believing that they referred to Cæsar, or else he wished to flatter them, as has been said above. She is depicted looking towards heaven, holding some lilies and roses in her hand in symbol of the purity of the Virgin, of whom she especially speaks in her verses.

Of this Sibyl is found a prophecy, which says :—

"Militiæ æternæ Regem sacra virgo cibabit
Lacte suo, per quem gaudebunt pectore summo
Omnia, et ex quo lucebit sydus ab orbe
Mirificum."

Bernardino de Busto calls this Sibyl Chimita, and says she was born in the time of Numa Pompilius, the second King of the Romans, and writes of her the following prophecy :—

"In prima facie virginis, ascendit puella facie

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pulchra, capillis prolixa, sedens super sedem stratum, puerum nutriens, dans ei ad comedendum jus propium, id est lac de cœlo missum."

And a second prophecy, which appears to be a declaration of the first, and is as follows:—

"In diebus illis exsurget mulier de stirpe deorum, nomine Maria, et habebit sponsum nomine Joseph, et procreabitur ab ea, sine commixtione viri, de Spiritu Sancto, Filius Dei nomine Jesu, et ipsa erit virgo ante et post partum. Qui vero ex ea nascetur erit verus Deus, et verus homo, sicut omnes Prophetæ prædicaverunt."

SEVENTH SIBYL

Sibilla Tiburtina

She was a native of the Tiber, a city of Italy, sixteen miles from Rome, and for this reason she was called Tiburtina, her proper name being Albumea, others say Italica, because she prophesied in Italy thirty years before Christ, and was the most modern of them all, because it was in the reign of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar. Of her it is stated that the Romans sought to erect a statue and hold her as a goddess; that this

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SIBILLA TIBURTINA.

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same Cæsar communed with her, and when awaiting her reply, saw the heavens rent open and a maiden appear holding a lovely Child in her arms. This maiden was seated on an altar, and a voice was heard, which said: *Hæc est ara filii Dei.* The Emperor in perturbation prostrated himself on the ground and adored God; and from that time he did not wish to be called God or Lord by the people, as was their custom; and on that spot he erected a temple with the title of Ara Cœli, in honour of that maiden whom he had seen with the Child in her arms. Others recount this in various ways, as Pineda in his *Monarchy.* This temple is in the possession of the Religious Observants of St Francis in Rome, under the same invocation of Ara Cœli. As is written by Father Fray Francisco Gonzaga in the Chronicles of his religion, and by Father Fray Lucas Vuadigno in his Annals, to this Sibyl is attributed the following prophecy:—

"Nascetur Christus in Bethlem et annuntiabitur in Nazareth, regnante Tauro pacifico, fundatore quietis; o felix illa mater cuius ubera lactabunt!"

This Sibyl also treated of the Death, Resurrection and Manifestation, Ascension, and other mysteries of Christ Our Lord. She is depicted gazing up to heaven at an image of the Mother

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of God, who holds in her arms her Son. In one hand of the Sibyl is a porringer, and in the other she holds a palm branch, to denote that the Child should be born, become a man, and eat from a porringer; while the palm implied that He was to die in Judea where there are an abundance of palms; the palm signifies Judea, as is verified by a coin of the Emperor Titus, in which is seen a figure of this Province close to a palm with the inscription: *Judæa capta.* She is also represented bearing a palm, to show us the justice of Christ, because the palm is a symbol of justice, for two reasons: first, because it yields fruit in proportionate size to the leaves; and secondly, because the matter of the palm is incorruptible, as should be the Princes and those who govern. Thus said the Royal Prophet David: *Justus ut palma florebit.* The palm is also employed to depict the innocence of Christ, of which the palm is a symbol: Saint Ambrose says that in the Canticles *Statura tua assimilata est palmæ* means the innocence of the Spouse, her fairness and purity. From whence Cardinal Vitalis tells us that the Cross of Our Lord was made with three or four kinds of woods, viz., cedar, cypress, olive, and palm. The foot of the Cross was of cedar, the straight stem or trunk of cypress, the arms of palm,

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and the tablet or inscription board of olive; and on explaining why the arms of the Cross should be of palm, says these words: "In palma quæ est durabilis intelligimus incorruptionem et munditiam castitatis, donum misericordiæ et pietatis." That is: "In the palm, which is durable, we understand incorruption and the beauty of chastity, and the gift of mercy and piety."

To this Sibyl is likewise ascribed the verses in the Third Book of the Oracles in honour of Our Blessed Lady:—

"Lætare et exulta puella!
Tibi, enim, gaudium donabit æternum,
Qui cœlum et terram condidit.
Enimvero in te habitabit, tibiq' erit
Immortale et indeficiens lumen."

Which is: "Be joyful and rejoice, child, because He has given you an eternal joy, He who made the heavens and the earth; and this Lord will dwell in you, and He will be your immortal eternal Light."

These verses of the Sibyl seem to agree with the hymn sung by the Church—"Regina Cœli, lætare. Alleluia. Quia quem meruisti portare. Alleluia," etc.

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EIGHTH SIBYL

SIBILLA PHRIGIA

She was daughter of Dardanus, who was said to be the son of Jupiter and of Neso, daughter of the King of the Turks. She prophesied in Anzira, a city of Asia Minor, about the year 2996 B.C., in the time of King Solomon or a little before. Of her we have the following:—

"Flagellabit Deus potentes terræ, et in olympo excelsus, veniet; firmabitur consilium in cœlo, et annuntiabitur Virgo in vallibus desertorum." She also wrote concerning the Death and Passion of Christ, of His burial and the Incarnation of the Divine Word; and as it belongs to the mystery which we are endeavouring to write about, I will quote the verses as they are written by Father Canisio:—

"Ipsa Deum vidi summum punire volentem,
Mundi homines stupidos et pectora cæca revelabit,
Et quia sic nostram complerent crimina pellem,
Virginis in corpus voluit dimittere cœlo
Ipse Deus prolem, quam nuntiat Angelus almæ
Matri, quæ miseros contracta sorde lavaret."

She is described robed in red, her hair loose and dishevelled, her arms bare, holding a naked

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SIBILLA PHRIGIA.

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SIBILLA AGRIPINA.

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sword in one hand, which signifies the punishment of the wicked in the Judgment, and a laurel branch in the other hand, as a symbol of the reward and victory of the good.

NINTH SIBYL

Sibilla Agripina or Egypcia

This Sibyl was a native of Egypt, and some called her Egypcia, others Agrippa, others again Sanbera. We have this prophecy of hers :—

"Invisibile verbum palpabitur, germinabit radix, sic habetur ut solium, non apparebit venustas eius, circumdabit eum alvus maternas, et florebit Deus lætitia sempiterna, et ab hominibus conculcabitur, et nascetur ex matre ut Deus, et conversabitur ut peccator."

She is depicted dressed in rose-coloured robes, one hand placed on her bosom, as though in admiration of the things which were revealed to her, and in the other hand she holds a sceptre, signifying by this, that Christ, of whom she spoke, was to be King and Lord.

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TENTH SIBYL

Sibilla Samia

As this Sibyl was a native of the Island of Samos, some have called her Heriphila. She lived in the time of Numa Pompilius, about the year 3294. He has this prophecy of hers:—

"Ecce veniet dives et nascetur de paupercula, et bestiæ terrarum adorabunt eum, et dicent: laudate eum in atriis cœlorum."

This Sibyl also said that the Lord would be crowned with thorns, and that He would have given to Him gall and vinegar to drink. To this one is also attributed that verse of the Holy Cross, which says: "O lignum felix in quo Deus ipse pependit."

She is described as of a beautiful countenance, with a fine veil on her head, in one hand a crown of thorns, and in the other an open book containing her prophecies.

Of this oracle and verse of the Holy Cross there is mention made in the works of Sozomeno, Suydas, Nicephorus, and others.

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SIBILLA SAMIA.

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SIBILLA HELLESPONTICA.

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ELEVENTH SIBYL

Sibilla Hellespontica

She was born in the Trojan camp, in a place called Marmesso, about the year 3450, in the time of Cyrus, the first King of Persia, 551 years before the birth of Christ Our Lord. Of her we have the following prophecy :—

"De excelso cœlorum habitaculo prospexit Deus humiles suos, et nascetur, in diebus novissimis, de Virgine Hebræ, in cunabulis terræ."

Canisio, in *Beata Virgine*, quotes those verses in praise of Mary most holy, which she wrote, and which are as follows :—

"Dum meditor, quondam, vidi decorare puellam,
Eximiè castam (quod Virgo servaret honorem)
Munere digna suo, et divino numine visa,
Quæ sobolem multo pareret splendore micantem,
Progenies summa, speciosa et vere regnaus,
Pacifica, mundum quæ sub ditione gubernat."

She also said that Christ Our Redeemer would not come on earth to undo the law, but to fulfil it, which is what that same Lord said in St Matthew. She is depicted with an aged countenance, coarsely dressed, with a handkerchief rolled around her throat and cheeks, in one

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hand a book of her prophecies, and in the other a sheaf of ears of corn, to signify that there should be born in the world He who was to be the living Bread and true food of the Soul.

TWELFTH SIBYL

Sibilla Erithrea

Some call her Babylonica, and that she came from Babylon. Others name her Heriphile; but the common opinion is that she was of the city of Ponia, in the province of Asia Minor. There are more accounts of this Sibyl than of any other, and to her is ascribed all the verses of the other Sibyls. It is also said that there were two Sibyls of the same name, one ancient and the other modern. The ancient one, authors make out, was the daughter-in-law of Noah, called Athenais: it has been already said that none of the Sibyls were married, and that all were virgins. This one was not daughter-in-law to Noah, as it is stated, for she lived before the destruction of Troy, and spoke and treated of its ruin, and

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SIBILLA ERITHREA.

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the falsehoods of Homer. This was about the year 2815. Of none of the other Sibyls have we so many verses and sayings as of Erithrea. She spoke much about the rigorous final Judgment, the Sequence which we have in the Mass of the Dead which says "Teste David cum Sibylla," is understood to mean Erithrea. There are likewise some of her verses which treat of the Judgment, the first letters of which compose the words *Jesus Christus Dei Filius Servator*, referred to by St Augustin, St Antoninus of Florence, and Thomas Bozio, and the treatises on the Sibyls mentioned above, and others. To her is commonly ascribed the following prophecy:—

"In ultima ætate humiliabitur Deus, et humanabitur proles divina, iungetur humanitati divinitas, jacebit in solio Agnus et officio puellari educabitur Deus et Homo."

St Augustine, in the book we have mentioned, quotes from Lactantius Firmianus the sayings of the Sibyl that refer to Christ Our Lord, which he writes in Romanee, and is as follows: "He will fall into iniquitous and infidel hands, these will give God blows with sacrilegious hands, and they will cast from their loathsome mouths poisoned spittle; He will offer them His Sacred

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Shoulders simply to be scourged, and being struck, He will keep silent, so that perchance none may know who He is, nor from whence He came to converse with those here below; and they will crown Him with a crown of thorns, and give Him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, and they will show by this meal their overmuch inhumanity. But thou, O people! blinded and foolish; didst not know thy God disguised to human eyes; and thou didst crown Him with thorns, thou gavest Him to drink horrible gall; the veil of the Temple will be rent, and in the middle of the day there will come over a most darksome night that will last three hours, and He will die the death, going to sleep for three days, and after this, returning from Hell, He will come to life. He will be the first to manifest to the chosen the principles of Religion." All this is referred to by St Augustin, also by Father Canisio.

In praise of the Virgin, Our Lady, is quoted the following verses of this Sibyl:—

"Cerno Dei matrem, qui se dimisit ab alto,
Ultima felices referent cum tempora soboles,
Hebræa quem Virgo feret de stirpe decora,
In terris multum teneris passurus ab annis,
Magnus erit tamen hic divino carmine vates
Virgine matre fatus, prudenti tempore vexat."

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And concerning the adoration of the Kings, is read these verses :—

"Illi libabunt aurum, mirrhamque ; ferentes
Thusque ; Sacerdotes, hæc omnia namque patrati."

These and many others are quoted in the work *Oracula Sibyllina.*

The Roman Senate sent fifteen Ambassadors to the city of Erithrea for the verses of this Sibyl, and they were placed in the Capitol. This Sibyl is painted holding to her breast a lamb, because she spoke of Christ Our Lord under the appellation of the Lamb, for such did St John the Baptist call Him, when he said : *Ecce Agnus Dei.* She is also represented with a Lamb to denote the innocence of Christ, His meekness, His riches, and the happiness which He promised—all which is symbolised by the lamb.

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THE TRUTH OF THE SIBYLS PROVED BY THE TESTIMONY OF PAGAN WRITERS

I WILL commence by Cicero, who was one of the most learned and eloquent of all the Latins, and who lived some seventy years before Christ. I quote what he says of the Sibyls:—*

"Sibyllæ versus observamus, quos illa furens fudisse dicitur; quorum interpres falsa quædam, hominum fama dicturus in Senatum putabatur; eum quem re vero regem habebamus, appellandum quoque esse regem, si salvi esse vellemus. Hoc si est in libris, in quem hominum et in quod tempus est? Callide enim qui illa composuit perfecit, ut quodcumque accidisset prædictum videretur, hominum et temporum definitione sublata. Adhibuit etiam latebram obscuritatis, ut iidem versus alias in aliam rem posse accommodari viderentur. Non autem esse illud

* Tull. 1. 2. de divinat. e., 110, 111, 112.

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carmen furentis, cum ipsum Poema declarat; est enim magis artis et diligentiæ quam incitationes et motus; tam vero ea quæ dicetur, cum deinceps exprimis versus litteris aliquid connectitur, ut in quibusdam Ennianis quæ Ennius fecit. Id certe magis est attenti animi quam furentis. Atque in Sibyllinis ex primo versu cujusque sententiæ, primis litteris, illius sententiæ carmen omne prætexitur. Hoc scriptoris est, non furentis; adhibentis diligentiam, non insani," etc.

The translation is as follows:—

"We preserve the verses of the Sibyl which she spoke, so it is said, when she was beside herself. It is believed that her interpreter during a great noise which prevailed, had said in the full Senate, that if we wished to save Rome we must needs bestow the title of King upon him who should truly fulfil the functions of such amongst us. If this is what these books tell us, to what man or at what time does this prediction refer? The author has been careful in not assigning any time or men, thus adapting the prophecies to every possible event. Moreover, these verses are enveloped in such obscurity that these very verses may receive many applications.

"Nothing, therefore, less resembles the in-

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spiration of a prophet in a fit of delirium than the art and care which is observable in these oracles, and the form of acrostic, or that attention in making sense with the initial letters of the verses, as is seen in some of the poetry of Ennius. Ennius fecit.

"I perceive in these verses more of study and enthusiasm. Nevertheless the Sibylline verses are thus composed: the first letters of the verses of one period forming a motto. In this is seen the writer and not the prophet, the man who calculates, and not a god insane," etc. And he concludes in these terms: "And for this reason is the knowledge of these Sibylline books prohibited to the public, and they are hidden from them; and it is ordered by our ancestors that they be not read unless by an order from the Senate, fearing lest they should tend to destroy rather than to establish religion."

From the Prince of Orators I follow with the Prince of Poets, Virgil, who deserves no less than a historian to be believed, since he speaks of a fact of which he can be a witness, and one who cannot be suspected of collusion with the Christians, as he wrote forty-one years before the coming of Christ, and which bears some idea of predictions, and that the Poets had their

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rapture and inspiration, which can place them in some sort among the Sibyls.

For this reason Constantine the Great, Lactantius, St Augustine, and other Fathers, have brought forward their testimonies as authentic proofs of our religion. This testimony is drawn from the Fourth *Eclogue*, and runs as follows :—

"Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.
Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas.
Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna," etc.
"Iu modo nascenti puero, qui ferrea primum,
Definet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
Casta, fave, Lucina.
Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri.
Irrita, perpetua solvent formidine terras."

I translate the above in prose, in order to render more faithfully the sense :—

"A new-born infant is now sent to us from the highest heaven. Behold the last age predicted in the verses of the Sibyl Cumea. A new course is taken by the greatest order of the ages. The Virgin also returns now, and the reign of Saturn, etc. You, O chaste Lucina, be propitious to this new-born infant, who will end a nation hard as iron, and will make another to be born, beautiful and precious as the gold.

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"Under the rule of this infant, if there rests any traces of our crimes, they will be effaced, and he will deliver the world from an eternal fear."

The next authority is that of the Emperor Aurelian, who certainly cannot be accused of being favourable to the Christians, since he was their greatest persecutor. It has been stated already that the Books of the Sibyls were forbidden to be read by the Christians, which evidently proves that they spoke in favour of our religion; but the letter which L. Domitius Aurelian sent to the Senate 271 years after the birth of Our Lord is a still more manifest proof:—

"Miror vos patres sancti, tandiu de aperiendis libris Sibyllinis dubitasse, perindie quassi in Christianorum Ecclesia et non in templo omnium deorum tractaretis," etc.

"I am astonished, holy Fathers, that you should have doubted so long a time, whether to consult the Books of the Sibyls or not, as though you had to discuss this in a Church of Christians and not in the Temple of all the gods," etc.

In order to understand his meaning it must be remarked that this Prince was engaged in the Marcomanic war, which was a dangerous one, and many of the bad politicians were not of

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opinion to have recourse to their gods, or to consult the Sibyls, alleging that to do so would be to betray fear in the Emperor, and the weakness of the Empire; but Aurelian on the contrary wrote to the Senate, that it was not a shameful thing for Princes to demand succour from their gods in their needs, and as for themselves, they need not be in any fear to open the Books of the Sibyls, the perusal of which was only forbidden to the Christians.

Further proofs can be adduced in defence of the Sibyls from what two illustrious Roman historians, both enemies to the Christians, have said concerning a very ancient prediction of the Sibyls, which was that a person, a native of Judea, would make himself the master of the Universe. These historians were Tacitus and Suetonius. Tacitus* says as follows: "Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis, sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret oriens profectique Judæa rerum potirentur." Many of the ancients were convinced that the writings which were under the guardianship of the priests declared that at the same time the East would become powerful, and that the people

* Corn. Tacit. L. ii. circa mesb.

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that came from Judea would become masters of all the world.

Suetonius says the same. "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum poteirentur." An ancient and permanent opinion is spread throughout the East, that the *Fates** held that then the people coming from Judea would render themselves masters of the whole Universe.

It must be here remarked, firstly, that these two authors speak of a report which is very ancient, widely spread and continuous, and which preceded the coming of Jesus Christ, since they both wrote about this question twenty-six years after each other.

Secondly, that this report proceeded from a prediction of the Sibyls, which Suetonius styles the *Fates*, and Tacitus *the writings of the priests*, that is to say, the writings which were under the care of the priests.

Thirdly, that this prophecy predicted that the people coming from Judea would subject the Romans, and would become the lords of all the Universe. This report so alarmed Vespasian, that he put to death all the Jews who were of

* *Destinies.*

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the family of David. Moreover, it is certain that this prediction marks the time of the birth of the Son of God, and the preaching of His Gospel.

It is well known that these two authors, and Josephus with them, flattered Vespasian in telling him that it was to him that this prophecy referred; but it is evident that this prophecy concerns solely Our Lord, and that this report had its origin not only from the Prophets, but also from the *Books of the Sibyls*, as Tacitus remarks, and the *Ancient Destinies* that Suetonius speaks of.

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THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

who have written concerning the truth of the Sibyls are :—

Saint Clement, Pope.
Athenagoras.
Theophilus of Antioch.
Saint Justin Martyr.
Tertullian.
Lactantius.
Saint Clement of Alexandria.
Saint Isidore of Seville.
Eusebius of Cæsarea.
Saint Optat.
Saint Jerome.
Saint Augustine.
Saint Prosper.
Saint John Damascene.
Palladius.
Saint Thomas Aquinas.
Onuphrius.
Sixtus of Siena.
Cardinal Baronius.
Cardinal Bellarmine.
Saint Ambrose.
Venerable Bede.

St Clement says :—

"The end of this world will be the Judgment by fire against those who have abhorred the Divine Religion, as is declared to us by the Prophets and Apostles, and even *by the prophecies*

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of the Sibyls," as he writes in his Epistle to the Corinthians.

St Justin Martyr says :—

"It is easy to comprehend in part, by the answers and oracles of the ancient Sibyl, which is the true religion, and the teaching of the Prophets"; and further, he goes on to give a detailed account of this prophetess, her parents, birthplace, and the manner of her coming from Babylon to Cumas, the spot where she dwelt and which he himself had visited. "We have seen," he says, "in the Town a grand and marvellous monument, a vast Edifice built out of one stone, where the natives say she spoke her oracles." He adds that in the centre of this Temple he was shown three cisterns, where she used to have water poured into to wash herself, and afterwards putting on a kind of *Simarre* or stole, she would retire to the depths of the Sanctuary, and ascending an elevated throne, she spoke her prophecies. He takes for his authority Plato, concerning the grossness noticed in the verses; then addressing himself to the Greeks, says: "Without again referring to the beauty of poetry and the polished language, and without allowing yourselves to be carried away by the spirit of contradiction, take heed in the depths of the discourse, and accept the lights which are

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cast upon us by the clear and lucid predictions of the coming of Jesus Christ our Saviour of the Word of God, which without being separated neither in virtue or power, has taken the nature of man primitively formed to the image of his Creator, and who has re-established us in the innocence of our first parents."

He quotes an oracle concerning the creation of Adam, and concludes in these words:—

"Generous children of Grace! If you do not prefer your deceitful imaginations about the gods which have no existence, to the salvation of your souls, believe, as I have already said, the ancient, the antique Sibyl, whose books are fortunately preserved throughout the universe. In their marvellous and divine inspirations she instructs you by her oracles, on the nature of those that are called gods, but who do not possess anything of divinity, and she predicts, under the clearest evidence, the future coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and all the details of His Life."

These words are very strong, but in his second *Apologia* laid before the Emperor Antonius and the two Cæsars, his adopted children, his language is still more powerful. It is in this writing where he deplores with a holy liberty the prohibition

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imposed on the Christians, on pain of forfeiting their lives, of reading the Books of the Sibyls, the oracles of the Prophets, and the work of a Pagan writer called Hydaspes, which no longer exists. "Yes," he says, "it is by the powerful efforts of the wicked demons that this interdiction has been carried out, in order that, deterred by the fear of reading these writings which would manifest the knowledge of good, the human race may remain for ever the slaves of the malignant spirit . . . but these books have nevertheless not come to destruction, for not only do we read these books fearlessly, but we bring them, as you perceive, under your notice, convinced that all will read them with pleasure." (Just. Apol. 2.)

Athenagoras, who lived in the same century, far from contradicting Saint Justin, confidently produces the same testimonies. (Athen. Apol.) He is followed by Theophilus of Antioch, who thus refutes the calumniators of the Christian religion: "The Sibyl, the Prophetess of the Gentiles and of the other nations of the world, at the commencement of her predictions, apostrophises thus the human race: Mortal men! bodies of clay, vile nothings, how can ye dare to elevate yourselves, and why do ye not think of the end of the world?

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"You do not tremble at the presence of a Sovereign God who sustains your being, and you do not fear Him who is the witness of all your actions." (Theoph. Antiochen ad Autolic.)

Lactantius amply shows how the Sibyls had predicted the birth of Jesus Christ, His preaching, miracles, passion, death, His resurrection, ascension, and His last coming. And he adds: "Some, convinced by the force of these testimonies are in the habit of taking refuge in the pretension they advance that these verses were not the work of the Sibyls, but that they have been imagined as composed by our co-religionists. But how are we to admit this thought when one has read Cicero, Varro, and the rest of the ancient authors who mention the Sibyl Erythrea and the other Sibyls in works from which we have borrowed these examples? Besides, the authors were dead before the birth of Jesus Christ according to the flesh. Nevertheless I do not doubt that these verses were held in the first ages as extravagancies; because no one could understand them, in view that they announced miracles which were well-nigh incredible, and to which no motive was assigned, nor the time, or author." (Lactant. De Vera sapient.)

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Clement of Alexandria, he who was so learned and enlightened, likewise extols, against the pagans, the authority of the Sibyls, who he says were given to the Gentiles as the Prophets were given to the Jews, to render them equally inexcusable. "As God," he says, "wished to save the Jews by giving them Prophets, in the same way He has raised up among the Greeks reliable persons, well versed in the knowledge of their own language, and the fittest to comprehend the goodness of God, for the salvation of the Gentiles." Besides the preaching of St Peter, the Apostle St Paul declares this when he says: "Take also the books of the Greeks: see how the Sibyl declares the unity of one God, and unveils the future." (See Clem. Alex. Strom. I. VI.)

The great Constantine who, in his quality of Emperor, had at his disposition these mysterious books—consulted by the tyrant Maximus, as referred to by Zosimus, speaks thus in the discourse which he addressed to the Fathers in the First General Council of Nicea: "Truly filled with the divine Breath, this Sibyl (Erythrea) predicted in verse that which should happen concerning the coming of the Son of God, and declares clearly the coming of Jesus Christ, by the order of the first letter of each line placed in

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the form of an acrostic—*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross.*"

He gives directly after the verses of which this is a translation: "At the appearance of the sign of Judgment, the earth will become covered with mists, and the Eternal King of Ages will be seen descending to judge all flesh and the whole world. Then the faithful, and the unfaithful, all, in that last moment will behold God seated on a throne raised above with His Saints, to pronounce the sentence against the souls of carnal men, whilst the waste lands will be seen covered by thorns. Men will now reject the Idols and riches, a searching fire will consume the earth, the heavens, the sea, and even to the very doors of the narrow prisons of hell. Then the bodies of the Saints released will return to light, but the wicked will be burnt by eternal flames. Each will have to reveal his faults, even those committed in secret, because the divine torch will dissipate the darkness of their hearts. On all sides will be heard sobs and gnashing of teeth. The brilliant light of the sun and of the starry planets will be eclipsed. The heavens will be rolled away and the moon will lose her splendour; the valleys will be raised up and the mountains will lower the heights of their summits. Every steep height

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will disappear from the midst of men. Every hill and plain will be levelled. The ships which cut the waves of the sea, the earth scorched by the lightning, will be seen dried up amid the once bubbling streams and running torrents. The celestial trumpet will make itself heard resounding in sad tones, to weep over the crimes of the wicked, and the sorrows of the world. The earth rent asunder will reveal the abysses of the Tartarus. The Kings themselves will come to the throne of God. Torrents of fire and of sulphur will pour down from the heights of the heavens. Now the Cross will be for all mortals a sign, a distinctive seal, the cherished aureole of the faithful, the life of the Saints, the scandal of the world, the salutary bath where the elect washed in twelve fountains will receive the light, the staff to lead, and the iron rod which chastens. And this King whose Name is traced in the initial letters of these verses is our God, our Eternal Saviour, our King, who delivered Himself to death for our sakes."

After having recounted these Sibylline Oracles the Emperor replies to the doubts of the Pagans in these words: "There are unbelievers who place no faith in these predictions although they acknowledge in the Sibyl Erithrea the gift of

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prophecy. They even suspect some writer, no less attached to our worship than given to poetry, of having composed these acrostics, of having supposed them, and then proclaimed them as the revelations of the Sibyls. But it is a fact that these predictions are true, since our Doctors have reckoned the time with such attentive exactitude, that it is impossible to suspect that this poem was composed after the coming and the condemnation of Jesus Christ, hence no one can maintain that these verses were not written long before by the Sibyl, without incurring the suspicion that he is manifestly convinced of falsehood."

St Augustine, the great Doctor of the Church, has treated upon the Sibyls in his erudite and learned work, the twenty-two Books of *The City of God*, which he composed with the object of destroying Judaism and Idolatry, and of establishing the truths of our holy Religion. He has thoroughly examined the subject, as he well knew the doubts which were cast on the truth of these oracles, for he lived in the first ages of the Church, and not far removed from the time when unbelievers wished to say that these Sibylline Oracles were inventions of the Christians. He acknowledges, as we do, that the oracles of the Sibyls were as trustworthy and true, as they

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were favourable to our religion. This is what he says of the Sibyl Erithrea in his master-work *Civitate Dei* (18th book, chap. 23): "*On the Sibyl Erithrea, well known among all the other Sibyls for prophecies which are the clearest concerning Jesus Christ.*"

"Many historians hold that it was about this time that the Sibyl Erithrea appeared" (St Augustin is speaking of the time when Osee held the sceptre of Israel). "It is well known that there are many Sibyls, according to Varro. This one has given us concerning Jesus Christ very clear predictions which we have read in verses of such bad Latin that they can hardly hold together, the work evidently of some clumsy translator as we learnt afterwards. The Pro-Consul Flaccianus, a man eminent for the breadth of his knowledge and learning, and the gift of eloquence, one day that we were communing together upon Jesus Christ, showed us the Greek text from which it had been so badly translated. Moreover he made us at the same time notice a certain passage where, on joining together the initial letters of each verse, was formed these mottoes, viz., *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.*" Saint Augustine then gives the sense of these verses after a better Latin translation, which is the same as the above

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poem which the Emperor Constantine pronounced in his discourse at the Nicean Council.

Then the Saint adds: "These passages comprehend in Greek twenty-seven verses, a number which composes the cube foot of three. Add to this, that if we join together the first letters of these five Greek *mots*, which we have said signifies *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*, we shall find *Ichthus*, which means in Greek *fish*, a mystical name of the Saviour, because He alone was able to continue living, that is to say, exempt from sin, in the midst of the Abysm of our mortality, which is similar to the depths of the sea."

"Moreover, that this poem, from which I have only quoted some verses, was of the Sibyl Erithrea, or of that of Cumæ (for on this point there is no accord), it is nevertheless certain that it contains nothing to favour the worship of the false gods; on the contrary, in certain passages it speaks so strongly against them and against their worshippers, that it appears to me that this Sibyl may well be placed among the members of the City of God. Lactantius has also inserted in his works some of the predictions of a Sibyl (without saying which) concerning Jesus Christ, and her testimonies, which are found

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dispersed in various parts of his book (*Lactan. Instit.* lib. IV. caps. 18 and 19), have seemed to me worthy of being gathered together here, and are as follows :—

"'He will fall,' says the Sibyl, 'into the hands of the wicked, who will give Him blows, and will spit on His face. On His part, He will present unresistingly His innocent shoulders to be scourged, and will allow Himself to be buffeted without uttering a word, in order that no one should know the Word He is, nor from whence He comes to speak to hell and to be crowned with thorns. The barbarians, as a welcome, have given Him gall to eat and vinegar to drink. Thou hast not known thy God, oh senseless nation! Thy God who laughs at the wisdom of men! Thou hast crowned Him with thorns, and fed Him with gall. The veil of the Temple will be rent, and there will come over great darkness in broad day for three hours. He will die and fall asleep for three days. Then He will return to light, and will manifest to the elect the first fruits of the resurrection.'" These are the Sibylline texts which Lactantius gives an account of in various parts of his works, and which we have collected together. Some authors assure us that the Sibyl Erithrea did not live

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during the epoch of Romulus, but during that of the war of Troy.

The same doctor in the exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, which he acknowledges to be his work, in the first book of his *Retractations*, cap. 25, explaining the words of the Apostle—"Segregatus in *Evangelium Dei quod ante promiserat per Prophetas**—Separated to preach the Gospel of God, which He had formerly promised by His Prophets"—says: "It is with good reason that the Apostle calls the Prophets of Judea the Prophets of God, because there had been also prophets who were not theirs, but in whom are found certain things which they have learnt and predicted of Jesus Christ: such as that which is said of the Sibyl."

He then at once produces the famous verses of Virgil:—

"*Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas.* Behold the last age predicted by the Cumea, has come." Then he adds: "*Cumæum autem carmen, Sibyllinum esse nemo dubitaverit.* Let no one doubt that the verses of the Cumana are not the verses of the Sibyl."

Simeon Metaphrastes, in his life of Saint Catherine, relates, "that the wise, holy woman

* Rom. i. 2.

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disputed against fifty of the most learned Philosophers and Orators of her time, in presence of the Emperor Maxentius, and on his representing to her that the religion she professed was new and unheard of, she produced at once all the testimonies of the Sibyls, and advanced them so forcibly that she converted them, becoming Christians and martyrs like herself."

St Jerome, who was deeply versed in science and in the study of ancient works, acknowledges ten Sibyls, and believed them to be virgins, and that the gift of prophecy was given to them as a reward for their virginity. He fixes the epoch of the existence of Erithrea in the reign of Romulus, and Samia in that of Numa and Tullus Hostilius. (Hieron. adv. Jovin. 1 lib. 1 cap.) "*Quid referam Sibyllas Erythræam atque, et octo reliquas, nam Varro decem fuisse auturnat, quarum insigne virginitas, et virginitatis præmium divinatio. . . . Recte concilium Dei sola scribitur nosse virginitas.*"

It appears that the Sibyls wrote, according to the general opinion, eight books, and the greater number of the Sibylline verses quoted by the Fathers of the Church are found within these eight poems, yet there are others collected by Lactantius which are not related. Perhaps the

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collectors do not know them, as we well know how little in our day these books are distributed. Among these, however, it appears that there are but three which contain an insight into the future, and which bear an application to the Passion of our Saviour. The Sibyls spoke on the Unity of one God, and the coming of His Son into the World; but above all, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection, since these predictions are related to us by the holy Fathers in the same manner as we read these prophecies in our books, and they are conformable with those of the Pagan writers who wrote concerning the Sibyls before the birth of our Lord.

I will conclude this little book in the words which St John employs when he finished his Gospel: "*Hæc autem scripta sunt ut credatis, quia Jesus est Christus Filius Dei, et ut credentes vitam habeatis in nomine ejus.*" * But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in His name.

All men who do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, will not be excused on the Day of Judgment—the Jews, because they have the testimony of the Prophets—the Gentiles, because

* John xx. 31.

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they had the testimonies of the Sibyls—and above all these, the wicked, unbelieving Christians, because they have the testimonies of both Prophets and Sibyls.

The testimony of the Sibyls should convince all reasoning spirits of the truth of our holy religion; because they spoke of Jesus Christ many ages before His birth, as is proved by the testimonies and writings of authors both sacred and pagan, and this the Sibyls could not have foretold but by Divine revelation.

For this reason, on the Day of Judgment these very Pagans will rise up to condemn those who, giving faith to many historians—that is to say, to authors of no authority and no religion—have refused to believe their oracles, which were dictated from Heaven, and confirmed point by point the history of our holy Gospels.

But we have, speaking with the Prince of the Apostles, a testimony still more certain than the testimonies of the Sibyls—that is, those of the Prophets who announced to us the coming of our Saviour, and who distinctly informed us of His name, His rank, the time of His coming into the world, the place of His birth, the gifts which the wise Kings would bring Him, His entrance into Jerusalem, His Passion, Death, and Resur-

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rection, the establishment of His Church, and the Eternity—all this predicted thousands of years before He came into the world.

We have, moreover all this, the testimonies of the Apostles and the Evangelists, who suffered terrible torments and a cruel death for the defence of the truths they preached—which they would not have endured had they not been well convinced and assured that He had returned from death to life, and that He had ascended into Heaven.

Lastly, we have the miracles worked by Jesus Christ, and later on by His disciples, to attest His Divinity; because there is none but God who can change the order of nature, for it is incontestable that He raised the dead, and performed many other miracles to convince men that He was the true Son of God, equal to His Father. And can we put forward a greater miracle than that of the conversion of the world by twelve poor fishermen?

Hence St Augustine says:—"He who after all these prodigies worked to convince him, demands still more prodigies, is himself a prodigy of obstinacy and infidelity."

Let us say with the great Apostle: "*Et manifeste magnum est pietatis Sacramentum, quod*

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*manifestatum est incerne, justificatum est in Spiritum, apparuit Angelis, prædicatum est gentibus, creditum est in mundo, assumptum est in gloria."** And evidently great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory.

"Si non suis vatibus
Credat vel gentibus
Sibyllinis versibus
Hæc predicta."
(Prose for Christmas.)

The original Sibylline Books were destroyed in the burning of the Capitol during the Dictatorship of Sylla, eighty-three years before the birth of Christ. In order to repair this loss the Senate ordered that a search should be made in Samos, Troy, and Erithrea, in many other cities of Italy, Greece, and Asia, and all that could be found of the Sibylline verses should be collected together. The natural result of this search for fragments was that many spurious ones were put together with the true ones, and the Sibylline Books, it appears, fell into discredit. The second collection was

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

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burnt by Stilicon, General of the Emperor Arcadius, in 399.

We have in our days a collection of Greek verses under the title of Sibylline Oracles, which not only predict in minute detail the destinies of Rome, but even the principal events of the life of Christ. For a long time it has been the fashion to cry down these works, and these fragments have been regarded and quoted as merely the productions of a pious fraud worked by the Christians in favour of their religion. This unjust judgment has been altered and refuted by the aid of modern criticism. It is now generally agreed upon of these predictions given by the Sibyls, that they are of importance as regards the history of ancient peoples, and the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. It is impossible to doubt them, not only on account of the famous eclogue of Virgil, but when one has read Cicero, Varro, and other ancient authors, who speak of the Sibyl Erithrea and various prophetesses, we all must indeed acknowledge what these books are, really an ineffable monument of the prophetic spirit which agitated the Universe.

It suffices to add that the Catholic Church has admitted these women as worthy of being

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respected, since she mentions them in the prose for the dead, and in the hymn for Christmas. Moreover on the walls of the renowned Cathedral of Amiens, there are still to be seen, although much obliterated, the representation of eight of the Sibyls, with verses beneath each figure; and also in the Church of Loretto, and in the library of the Vatican at Rome are seen mural decorations of the Sibyls.

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SIBYLLARUM DE CHRISTO VATICINIA, EX VETUSTISS, CODICE DESCRIPTA

Sibylla Persica

Of the date of her birth and death we have no record.

"Eam tamen aurea veste indutam et candido
Velo coopertum necessisse legimus."

Que de Christo hæc prænunciavit: panibus simul quinque et duobus piscibus hominum milia in heremo quinque satiabit, et reliquas tollens duodecim cophinos implevit in spem multorum. Alio quoque in loco, sic ait. *Ecce bestia conculcaberis et gignetur dominus in orbe terrarum:** et gremium virginis erit salus gentium: et pedes ejus invalitudine hominum et invisibile verbum palpabitur. Hujus Sibylle mentionem facit Nicanor: qui restas Alexandri Macedonis sculpsit.

"Virgine matre satus; pando residebit asello,
Jucundus princeps, unus qui ferre salutem
Rite queat lapsis: tamen illis forte diebus

* Motto scroll.

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Multi multa ferent immensi fata laboris.
Solo sed satis est oracula provere verbo:
Ille Deus casta nascetur virgine magnus."

Sibylla Libica

Quo tempore floruerit non satis constat: eam tamen haud multum juvenem vaticinatam fuisse legimus—Ornata *serto viridi* ex floribus in capite, vestita palio honesto. Ita *de Christo* suum vaticinium protulit dicens. Ecce veniet dies; et illuminabit Dominus condensa tenebrarum; et nexus synagoge solvetur; et desinent labia hominum cum viderint regem viventium et tenebit ille in gremio virgo domina gentium. Et regnabit in misericordia: et uterus matris ejus erit statera cunctorum, inde in manus iniquas veniet et dabunt Deo alapas manibus incertis miserabilis et ignominiosus erit miserabilibusque spem prehebit.

Hujus Sibylle meminit Euripides in lamie protago.

"Ecce dies venient, quo æternus tempore princeps,
Irradians sata læta, viris sua crimina tollet,
Lumine clarescet cujus Synagoga recenti:
Sordida qui solus reserabit labra reorum,
Aequus erit cunctis, gremio rex membra reclinet
Regina mundi, sanctus per sæcula vivus."

Sibylla Delphica

Sibylla Delphica vates insignissima in templo

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Delphici Apollinis nata et ante Trojana bella vaticinata.

She described by prophecy all the (seriem) incidents of the life of the Divine Word—His miracles, betrayal, capture, and ill treatment;—moreover wrote very lucidly of His Resurrection and Ascension.

Unde ferent eam hæc pauca dixisse, ipsum suum cognosce Dominum, qui vere Dei Filius est, et Alibi nascetur propheta, absque maris coitu, et virgine ejus.

"Non tarde, veniet, tacita sed mente tenendum
Hoc opus, hoc memori semper qui corde reponet,
Hujus pertentant cor gaudia magna prophetæ
Exemii, qui virginæ conceptus ab alvo
Prodibit, sine contactu maris, omnia vincit.
Hoc naturæ opera: at fecit, qui cuncta gubernat."

Sibylla Cimmeria—Chimicha

Sibylla Cimmeria in Italia nata alias Lhimica vestita celestina veste deaurata capillis per scapulas sparsis: et juvenis (de Gennius.) sic ait:

In pria facie virginis ascendit puella pulchra facie prolixa capillis: sedens super sedem stratam: nutrit puerum dans ei ad comedendum ejus proprium: id est: lac de cœlo missum.

"In teneris annis facie præsignis, honore
Militiæ æternæ regem sacra virgo cibabit.
Lacte suo: per quem gaudebunt pectore summo.

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Omnia, et esse lucebit sidus ab orbe
Mirificum : sua dona Magicum laude ferentes,
Objicient puero myrrham, aurum, Thura Sabæa."

Sibylla Samia

A Samo insula : nudem enseno sub pedibus formosum pectus subtileq : velus in capite habens, sic ait : Ecce veniet dives nascetur de paupercula, et bestiæ terrarum adorabunt eum et dicent Laudate eum in atris cœlorum.

De hac scripsit Erastosthenes in antiquis annalibus samorum reperisse scripturi.

" Ecce dies, nigras quæ tollet læta tenebras,
Mox veniet, solvens nodosa volumina vatum
Gentis Judæa, referent ut carmina plebis.
Hunc poterunt clarum vivorum tangere regem,
Humano quem virgo sinu inviolata fovebit.
Annurit hoc cœlum, rutilantia sidera monstrant."

Sibylla Cumana*

Fuit tempore Tarquinii Prisci et de Christo teste Virgilio : sic ait : Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas : Virg. IV. Ecl. Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo. Jam redit et virgo redeunt Saturnia regna. Jam nova progenies cœlo dimittitur alto. In modo nascetur

* Some say it was this Sibyl who brought the nine books, or as others say three Sibylline Books, to Tarquinius Superbus.

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pueri: qui ferrea primum definet, et toto surges gens aurea mundo.

"Jam mea certa manent, et vera, novissima verba,
Ultima venturi quod erant oracula regis,
Qui toti veniens mundo cum pace placebit,
Ut voluit, nostra vestitus carne decenter,
In cunctis humilis, castam pro matre puellam
Deliget, hæc alias forma præcesserit omnes."

Sibylla Hellespontica

In agro Trojano vico marinesso circa oppidum Gergithium nata. Vetula et antiqua veste rurali induta, ligato velo antiquo capite sub gula circumvoluta usque ad scapulas quasi despecta quam scribit Heraclides dixisse: De excelsis cælos habitaculo prospexit Deus humiles suos. Et nascetur in diebus novissimis de Virgine Hebræ, in cunabulis terræ.

"Dum meditor quondam, vidi decorare puellam,
Eximio (castam quod se servaret) honore,
Munera digna suo, et divino numine visa,
Quæ sobolem multo pareret splendore micantem:
Progenies summi, speciosa et vera Tonantis,
Pacifica mundum qui sub ditione gubernet."

Sibylla Phrygia

Induta veste rubea, nudis brachiis, antiqua saturnina facie crinibus sparsis, digito indicans, sic dixit: Flagellabit Deus potentis terræ et

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Olympo excelsus veniet et firmabitur consilium in cœlo. Annunciabitur virgo in vallibus desertorum.

"Ipsa Deum vidi summum, punire volentem
Mundi homines stupidos, et pectore cœca, rebelles.
Et quia sic nostram complerent crimina pellem,
Virginis in corpore voluit demittere cœlo
Ipse Deus prolem, quam nunciet Angelus Almæ
Matri, quo miseros contracta sorde levaret."

Sibylla Europea

Decora Juvenis, facie rutilans, velo subtilissimo capite legato, induta veste aurea: de Christo sic ait: Veniet ilie et transibit montes, et colles et latices silvarum Olympi, regnabit in paupertate, et dominabitur in silentio et egredietur de utero Virginis.

"Virginis æternum veniet de Corpore verbum
Purum, qui valles et montes transiet altus.
Ille volens etiam stellato missus Olympo,
Edetur mundo pauper, qui cuncta silentis
Rex erit imperio: sic credo, et mente fatebor:
Humano simul ac divino semine natus."

Sibylla Tiburtina

Nomine Albanea, non multum senex, veste rubea induta desuper ad collus pellem hirciniam scapulas habens capillis discopertes cujus

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simulacrum tenebat librum in quo scriptum erat: Nascitur Christus in Bethlehem et annunciabitur in Nazareth. Regnete thauro pacifico fundatore quietis. O felix illa mater cujus ubera illum lactabunt.

"Verax ipse Deus dedit hæc mihi munia fandi,
Carmine quod sanctum potui monstrare puellam,
Concipiet quæ Nazareis in finibus, illum
Quem sub carne Deum Bethlemica rura videbunt.
O nimium felix, cœlo dignissima mater,
Quæ tantam sacro lactabit ab ubere prolem."

Sibylla Agrippa

Rosea veste cum clamide rosea, non multum juvenis manum tenens in gremio quasi admirans et deorsum respiciens, sic ait de Christo, Invisibile verbum palpabitur et germinabit ut radix et siccabitur ut folium, et non apparebit venustas ejus, et circum dabitur Alnus materna et flebit Deus leticia sempiterna et ab hominibus conculcabitur, et nascetur ex matre ut Deus, et conversabitur ut peccator.

"Summus erit sub carne sortus, charissimus atque,
Virgine et veræ complebit viscera sanctum
Verbum, concilio, sine noxa spiritus almi:
Despectus multis tamen ille, salutis amore,
Arguet, et nostra commissa piacula culpa:
Cujus honos constans, et gloria certa manebit."

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Sibylla nobilissima Erithrea*

In Babylonia orta, de Christo sic ait: In ultima autem ætate humiliabitur Deus, et humanabitur proles divina junget in humanitati divinitas, Jacebit in feno agnus, et officio puellari educabitur Deus et homo. Signa precedent apud appellas. Mulier vetustissima puerum prestius concipiet. Boetis orbis mirabitus et ducatum præstabit ad ortum.

"Cerno Dei natus, qui se demisit ab Alto,
Ultima felices referent cum tempora soles:
Hebræa quem virgo feret de stirpe decora,
In terris multum teneris passurus ab annis,
Magnus erit tamen hic divino carmine vates,
Virgine matre satus, prudenti pectore verax."

Maxima Biblia Veterum Patrum (464), Tom. II.

Nine books of Sibylline Oracles offered to Tarquinius. Three destroyed; offered the rest at same price. Not being able to obtain the price, burnt the half, and offered the same at same price for remaining three.

Tarquinius consulted the augurs, who ordered as much money as the woman asked to be given.

The woman advised the most careful keeping of the books, and disappeared.

* Because Erithrea was more noble and celebrated than all the rest. St Aug. de civ. Dei XVIII. cap. XXIII.

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Tarquinius chose two of the most illustrious citizens, to whom he entrusted the keeping of the books.

On the expulsion of the Kings the Sibylline books fell to the care of the State: whereupon they were handed over to the careful keeping of some of the most illustrious citizens, who held the office for life and were exempt from all service, military or civil.

The Romans held these books in the greatest regard, and kept them with great reverence and care. They consulted them upon every emergency of State difficulty.

These books remained whole and safe and in the Bellum Marcicium in cella subterranea, inclusi arce lapidæ, asservati a decem viri.

At last burnt either by design or chance, Cremato Capitolio, 671. Those which now exist are collected from divers places; part were collected from Italian cities, part from Erithris Asiæ by the S.C. legates sent to transcribe them; and lastly, a part was collected from private sources.

Sequor autem hic Terentii Varronis auctoritate qui ista prodidit in libris rerum divinum.

Idem lib. I.

. . . . . .

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Sibyllarum de Christo vaticinia, cum appropriatis singularum figuris.

Varia Judeorum et gentilium de Christo testimonia.

De captione Domini.

In manus iniquas infidelium postea veniet.

De alaphisatione.

Et dabunt Deo alapas manibus incertis.

De consputione.

Et impurato ore expuent veneratos sputus.

De verberatione dorsi.

Dabit vero ad verbera simpliciter dorsum
De colaphisatione ; et obnuntes centia.
Et colophos accipiens tacebit ; ne quis agnoscat
Quo verbum vel unde venit ; ut inferis loquatur.

De coronatione spinea.

Et corona spinea coronetur.

De fellis et aceti potatione.

Ad cibum autem fel : et ad sitim acetum dederunt. Inhospitalitatis hanc monstrabunt mensam.

De verbo Christi "Nesciunt quid faciunt."

Ipsa enim insipiens gens dum Deum tuum non intellexisti.
Juventem mortalium mentibus.
Iterum de coronatione et fellis potu.
Sed et spinis coronasti et horridum fel miscuisti.

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De velo Templi ascisso.

Templi vero velum scindetur.

De trium horarum tenebris.

Et medio die nox erit tenebrosa nimis in tribus horis.

De morte Christi triduana.

Et morte morietur tribus diebus somno suscepto.

De Resurrectione et reditu ab inferis.

Et tunc ab inferis regressus : ad lucem veniet.
Primus resurrectionis principio revocatus ostenso.
Unde præcedentia vaticinia beatus Augustinus desumpserit.

Cap. XX.

Non nulli sane Erithream Sibyllam non Romuli sed belli Trojani *tempore* fuisse scriptum erunt.

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THE BOOKS OF THE SIBYLS

First Book

The collection of Sibylline verses is prefaced by a long poem or fragment preserved by Theophilus of Antioch, which, however, bears no relation to the rest of the work. It treats of the unity of God, the grandeur of His works, and the worthlessness of idols.

In this composition we are constantly reminded of the Book of Psalms, and the latter portion of the prophecy of Isaias from the forty-first chapter; Idolatry, Zoolatry, and particularly Ophiolatry, were in all their power, when this piece of poetry, grave and majestic, was composed. It may equally be attributed to a Jew or to a Christian. We think that it could be justly attributed to a Jew, as it seems to be directed against the mystery of the Incarnation, or at least it may easily be interpreted in that sense.

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After this preamble, which may nevertheless serve as a preface, the First Book commences, similarly to all Epic or Didactic poems, by a short exposition and invocation. Then the author enters into the subject-matter by the narrative of the Creation of the World according to Genesis. Nothing is wanting, neither the *Fiat Lux*, nor the distinct work of the Six Days, nor the creation of man and woman, the terrestial paradise, the innocence, the temptation by the serpent, the clothing of fig-leaves, the *crescite et multiplicamini*, the invention of the Arts, the corruption of the human race. The author divides the Antediluvian period into five ages, then traces the history of the Deluge with the same details as Moses, and often uses the same terms.

But now the cabalist appears: it proposes the name of God in a cabalistic enigma of deepest wisdom, after having at once recalled the previous *Ego sum qui sum*, which was not to be pronounced until fifteen ages later on Mount Horeb. We shall find in this book many other anachronisms of this kind.

Noah preached a sermon to the people of his time, yet did not convert them: he goes into the Ark with the animals: the cataracts of the

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heavens and the fountains of the deep are opened, and the waters raise the Ark, and all things perish. At the end of the Deluge Noah sends out a dove, then the raven, which returned not. The earth is uncovered: the Ark stops on the heights of Ararat in Phrygia, and not in Armenia: the rainbow is seen amid the clouds: the pact is concluded. The Titans are born, and they wage war against heaven.

The Almighty will engulph them beneath the waves of the sea: a portion of the Universe will be submerged anew, but the human race will not perish in the second deluge.

After this reminiscence of the Deluge of Deucalion, the author passes without any other transition to the Messiah, the repairer of sin. She designates his name of Jesus by the value of the letters which compose it, writing in letters the surname of Christ; speaks of the adoration of the wise men, indicates the three presents they would bring the new-born child; designates the precursor in the same terms as Isaias, mentions his decollation by Herod, and the dancing talents of Herodias, of which the head of John the Baptist became the price. She recounts the flight of the Saviour into Egypt, names nearly all His miracles, and terminates by a detailed recital of

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His Passion. Such is the analysis of the first canto, a book which contains some four hundred verses.

Second Book

From the commencement of the Second Book the author is raised up enthusiastically to speak in some verses of the divinity which weighs her down, and which compels her to prophecy. Then she announces in redundant language a multitude of evils which will come upon hapless humanity, and which will last for a thousand years. Never has such a collection of sorrows and calamities been seen. Rome, *which is placed on seven hills*, will tremble; the Universe will become depopulated; and scarcely will human vestiges appear here and there on the earth.

But the human race will not perish: its evils will only be a prelude to the happy reign of the Messias, of whom will appear the glorious sign in the firmament. The Poet here describes the temporal happiness of this reign promised by the millenarians. But this happy reign will come to an end: the human race will return to its crimes and to its evils. Then Antichrist will appear, and he will accomplish the signs and prodigies even to the point of seducing even the elect, if it were possible.

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"Surgent enim pseudo-christi, et pseudo-prophetæ: et dabant signa magna, et prodigia ita ut errorem inducantur, si fieri potest etiam electi."* He will gather together the twelve tribes of Israel which are dispersed throughout the Universe, *as they were by the sword of the Assyrians*, and He will found a new kingdom, but of short duration. *Then blessed will be the servants whom the Lord will find watching.* Let no one slumber, because no one will know *if He will come in the night or in the noonday. Beati servi illi, quos cum venerit Dominus invenirit vigilantes.*†

Vigilate ergo, nescitis enim quando dominus domus veniat: sero, an media nocte, an galli cantu, an mane.‡

Soon after will appear Elias. Then will the sorrows be so great, that never will the like have been seen since the commencement of the world: *alas for the Universe, alas for the women who are great with child and suckle.*

To these reminiscences of the Gospel succeeds a picture of the destruction of the World, similar in every way to the prophecies of the New Testament.

After this follows another tableau in which

* Matt. xxiv. 24. † Luke xii. 37. ‡ Mark xiii. 35.

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are designated every imaginable crime, such as they will appear before the supreme Judge, and in opposition, the happiness reserved to virtue.

This second canto terminates by a detached piece, in which the Sibyl speaks of the Unity of God, the creation, and in particular the creation of man, the inanity of Idols, of avarice: of the birth of Christ after the conquest of Egypt by the Romans; and, in a word, of the evils she will announce in a more detailed manner in the succeeding book.

Third Book

The Third Book, which is much longer than the preceding ones, is composed of a large number of detached pieces, many of which have neither beginning or end. In it is found all sorts of things except chronology and a logical order. The Sibyl begins in this way: "After the reign of the Cæsars, and during the course of years, will come the reign of Belias (no doubt the Anti-christ) who will overturn the summits of the mountains, will dry up the waters, put out the light of the sun, and of the moon, and of stars, and will work many other miracles before the eyes of the astounded mortals; but these will be *false miracles.*

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"But Belias will fall, his domination will last but a time: after him, will be established the reign of a woman, a widow, who will take gold and silver, precious metals, and the wealth of the world, and will fling them into the sea. Then the heavens will be rolled away like a book, the elements will be mingled together, and the world will be ended."

However, let us return to the Tower of Babel, which the children of Noah raised up on the plains of Assyria. From Babel came the name of Babylon, the most ancient empire of the world. This was to be the tenth age of the world, during which will reign Saturn, Titan, and Japhet, born from the union of heaven and earth. Here the author recounts to her readers all the history, if true, of the misfortunes of Saturn, of his divine *lignee*, the frauds of Rhea, of the war of Titan, and the division of the world among Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto.

Following this, but long after these events, will rise the empires of Egypt, of Persia, of Medea, Ethiopia, Assyria, Macedonia, the second empire of Egypt, and, indeed, the Roman Empire. It was now that the Sibyl felt herself divinely inspired to reveal to mortals the destinies of the world. Let it be known now what the

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future bears upon it, the kingdom of Solomon, which will comprise Phœnicia, Asia, Persia, Phrygia, Pamphilia, Carie, Mysie, and Lybia. After this will rise the empire of Greece, after which that of Macedonia, and indeed a great empire without a name, which our commentators take to be the Roman Empire, and which resembles more that of the Seleucides than the Christian Empire. Then a long narrative of all the evils which the pagan world is menaced with, or that had been accomplished in parts; then a detailed account of all the temporal felicities which the Christian Church is destined to spread over the world.

Fourth Book

The Fourth Book contains almost as many moral precepts as history, meanwhile it prophesies anew the empire of Assyria, of Media and Persia, the ruin of Egypt, and the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. It predicts the first eruption of Vesuvius, and the destruction of Pompeii; the conquests of Alexander, those of the Roman Republic, the furies of Nero, the conquest of Judea by Titus, the great wars of the Romans in Asia, and the end of the world.

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Fifth Book

After speaking of Alexander and the ruin of Troy, the author, from the commencement of the Fifth Book, traces the history of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Adrian, describing each by the cabalistic estimate of its name.

After this she calls herself sister of Isis, and starts from that to renew with all its bitterness, her doleful prediction against Egypt and its idolatry; and then she makes an excursion through Asia and Africa, describing in detail the events already accomplished, and glances into the future. She allows herself one prediction which the future has not justified: Rome is to be razed to the ground, and will be made for ever deserted.

Sixth Book

The sixth canto is composed of only a few verses, containing the narrative of many circumstances of the Passion of Christ and the ruin of Jerusalem.

Seventh Book

The seventh contains a fresh excursion through the world and across ages. The author guesses from the past, but cannot do likewise of

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the future; for example, Gaul is to be covered by sands as arid as are those of the deserts of Lybia, which will never produce a blade of grass or an ear of corn. It concludes with a description of the temporal joy which Christianity promises to the world, and by a public confession of the Sibyl, who asks that she be stoned in expiation of her crime. If the confession be a true one, the stoning she demands is well deserved. The object of the author appears to be to render the Sibyls despicable in the eyes of even the pagans themselves, and makes use of all her pretended oracles in order to strengthen the truths of Christianity. It would be indeed an important question whether this object was attained, and if her works found any response.

Eighth Book

The last canto is one of the longest, the fullest, and the best arranged. After reviewing the history of the human race at the time of building the Tower of Babel, the author depicts in some beautiful verses the greatness of Rome and its insatiable cupidity. She then predicts for it a complete ruin in punishment of its crimes, and in particular for its idolatry. It depicts the reign of Adrian, of Tiberius, of Nero; the parsimony

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of the second, and the prodigalities of the latter. She arranges the tyrants and sinners before the tribunal of God, addressing a long vehement apostrophe to the haughty and cruel mistress of the human race, whose power will be reduced to nought before the vengeful arm of the Most High. The verses are arranged in the form of prophecies, the events accomplished after two centuries by the Roman armies in Europe and Asia. The Sibyl takes a pleasure above all in describing the ruin of Rome, which it has seen in vision or desire, placing its ruin 948 years after its foundation. It is only at this price that Christianity will be able to implant itself on the world. The year 948 of Rome falls on the 195th of the Christian era, an epoch of military anarchy, during which Rome was no doubt, in various senses, riddled by different factions, but during which its existence was never imperilled.

The canto terminates by general considerations on the true religion and on idolatry, but this part of the book is specially distinguished by a long detailed narrative of the life of *Jesus Christ, King of Ages, from the Annunciation made by the Angel Gabriel*, to His Ascension into heaven. The principal circumstances of His miracles, Passion, and Resurrection, are

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found minutely detailed, the whole under the form of prophecy. "And we," exclaims the Sibyl in concluding, "we who have issued from the holy and celestial line of Christ, let us manifest ourselves worthy of our origin, and let us preserve in all its integrity our beautiful religion."

The greater number of the Sibylline verses quoted by the Fathers are found inserted in these eight cantos, but there yet remains a certain number collected by Lactantius which are not described. Among the latter there are only three which contain an insight into the future, and which could be applicable to the Passion of the Saviour. Moreover, Lactantius does not attribute them to the Sibyl, but to the Oracle of Miletus pronounced after the Passion.

Were we to give our opinion on the collection of Sibylline verses, we should be inclined to say that they were composed of fragments collected together here and there, and circulated among the Christians. Perchance they were composed by different people throughout the world and mingled with the history of events already accomplished, recollections of the Gospels, and may be, of a certain number of oracles, Sibylline

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or otherwise, some of which were previous and others since the establishment of Christianity, but all applicable to its doctrines. Eusebius, St Justin, Lactantius, furnish us with proofs that the oracles when consulted on the fact of Christianity, frequently gave answers which confirmed it in the main, although the intention and style were hostile to it. The Fathers themselves have employed these oracles as dogmatic demonstrations.

But what impels us to believe that these Sibylline Oracles were not a consecutive work, the offspring of only one mind—are the frequent renewals of the same subjects, the repetition of the same prophecies, book by book, with the only difference of change of expression. The origin must have been of many, or else the translations made of the same utterance in various parts were united together. It is in this way that Olympus became peopled by a multitude of different gods of various types, but which could all be traced to one at the beginning.

The work of the first edition of the Sibylline verses seems to have been to collect all that could be found, joining them together by links more or less harmonious.

After this examen, we must ask ourselves

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whether there ever were Sibyls, and what was the upshot of the Sibylline verses so famous in the Roman world at the time of the birth of Christianity.

Many writers have endeavoured to determine the age and the nationality of each of the fragments which compose the collection we possess, but it must be acknowledged that their conjectures are not equally satisfactory, and often destroy one another.

Such are the conclusions arrived at by one of the latest defenders of the Sibylline verses—*Vervost in Thes. de carminibus Sibyllinis. Parisius, Renouard*, 1844, in 8vo. Firstly, that the third book and the introduction are ascribed to the Jews of Alexandria 163 years before the common era. That which the author calls by the name introduction, is a detached fragment which treats of the persecution of Antichrist, and the last days of the world. The author demonstrates the first part of his theses in a superabundant manner, and is even very correct in what concerns the date.

Moreover, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Eusebius, Lactantius, and other Fathers, quote the third book, or allude to it. We admit that the Sibyls passed as authentic in the eyes

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even of the pagans, before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, a great portion of the first and second books were ascribed to, or supposed to be, by the Judaised Christians about the first ages of the Church. Such is also the case in the fourth book, which encloses more foreign interpolations, and the origin of which is difficult to recognise.

Thirdly, the fifth book was composed under Antoninus by the heretics, probably the Ebionites and the Cerinthiens. The sixth and eighth books bear numberless traces of the same hand, and the rest is Jewish or pagan.

It is not worth while to divide ourselves into two camps and discuss the question bitterly, since both will arrive at a similar result.

Our readers will no doubt join with us in viewing the folly of long discussions, and they will do well to preserve the Sibylline verses as objects of pure curiosity, not of literature, and without attaching to them any great importance.

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EXTRACTS FROM A SPANISH BOOK,

entitled *Oraculos de las doce Sibilas, Profetisas de Christo nuestro Señor.* Por el Licenciado Balthasar Porreno. Cura de las Villas de Sacedon y Corcoles, 1621. Illustrated with 12 portraits of the Sibyls.

Names of the Sibyls

Sibilla Persica.	Sibilla Tiburtina.
Sibilla Libica.	Sibilla Phrigia.
Sibilla Delphyca.	Sibilla Egypcia.
Sibilla Cumana.	Sibilla Samia.
Sibilla Europa.	Sibilla Hellespontica.
Sibilla Cumea.	Sibilla Erithrea.

In this work are quoted one hundred and thirty-three authorities from which the Author has collected the materials for his work on the Twelve Sibyls.

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Introduction

Clement of Alexandria,* a most learned man, who, as St Jerome informs us, flourished about the year 207, says that in the same way as God our Lord gave to the Jews Prophets, in order that they should be apprised of the coming of the Son of God into the world—He likewise gave to the Greeks and Gentiles women Prophets, that they also might have the same knowledge, and not be able at any time to allege ignorance of such an important event.

The doctrines of the Sibyls were distasteful to many of the Gentiles, because what they prophesied appeared to them impossible—such as that the Messias was to be Man and God, and His Mother a virgin and mother, and that He was to be King and Priest. Hence many held these women to be mad, and they endeavoured to burn their oracles; and above all, because the Sibyls announced to them a new King and supreme Monarch.

St Justin Martyr,† who lived about the year 240, also says, "that among the impious Gentiles there was a punishment imposed upon those who

* Clem. 6, Strom. D. Hieron. de vir. illus.
† Inst. in Admonit. Get.

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should read the oracles of the Sibyls, because these oracles were a confirmation of the doctrines and professions of the Christians. And another reason was that they prophesied the coming of Christ the Eternal King, at whose coming they judged would end their sovereignty. Of this punishment Flavius Vopiscus* treats in his life of the Emperor Valerian.

Here it is well to remark that in proportion as the Devil endeavoured to darken and to cast down the oracles and prophecies of the Sibyls during those first ages of the Christian Church, so much more were they proclaimed and extended throughout the world; and these prophecies all remained in their truth and purity until the time of Julian the Apostate, who wished to burn them on Mount Ethna, but his endeavours were vain because the Christians collected many verses of the oracles and placed them among their writings, and in this way they have been handed down to our times, particularly the oracles of the Sibyl Erithrea, as is affirmed by Lactantio Firmianus† and Marcus Varro.

The Sibyls were women full of God, as is told us by Diodorus Siculus, Servius, and Lactantius.

* Flau. Vopi. in vita Valer.

† Lactan. inst. lib. I. cap. 6, et in ira lib. I. cap. 22.

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Marcus Varro* says that the word Sibyl is the same as "Counsel of God." The same is said by St Jerome. Suidas† writes, that Sibyl is a Roman name and means prophetess. John Boccacio, in his book on Illustrious Women, chap. 19, says: "Sirius in the Eolic language means *God*, and Boule *Thought*, or a person who carries God in his thought."

The Saints and Scholastic Doctors acknowledge that these Sibyls were prophetesses, and assert that they were saved and are Saints. It is said in a general way of them that they were women full of the Spirit of God, who rejected the gods of the Gentiles and confessed one only God—who kept perpetual virginity, and who knew the things to come. Clement Alexandrinus‡ quotes a saying of the Apostle St Paul in which he mentions the Sibyls, and although this saying of his is not part of the writing received by the Church, yet from the repute of the author, should be held in esteem. The quotation is as follows: "Libros quoq: Grecos summite agnoscite Sibyllam quomodo unum Deum significet et ea qua sunt futura," etc. Which means, "Read the Greek Books, and understand in them the Sibyls, who

* Mar. Varro in lib. ser. divin. Diodor. Sicul. lib. 5.
† Servio, lib. 4, Enead. ‡ 6 Stromat.

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confessed one God and revealed things which were to come at the time when they prophesied them, and in them you will find clearly manifested the knowledge of the Lord God."

The Greeks pretend to say that the Sibyls were really only one, each assuming a different land and birthplace. Some have called her Erithrea, others Sicula, others Sardinia, others Rhodes, others Persica, etc.

Marcianus Capella * says that there were but two — Erofila Troyana, daughter of Marmeso, whom he says is the same as Phrigia and Cumea; and the other was Simacha, daughter of Hyporense, who was born in Erithra and prophesied in Cumas.

Pliny † says that in Rome there were three statues of Sibyls. One was placed by Pacurius Taurus; and the other two by Marcus Mesala, and these three he calls Solino Cumana, Delphica, and Erithrea.

Elianus, ‡ in his varied history, places four Sibyls, viz.: Erithrea, Samia, Egypcia, Sardinia; while others add to these two more, who were La Judea and Cumea.

Lactantius Firmianus, § St Jerome, St Au-

* Marcianus Capel. † Plin. lib. 34, c. 5.
‡ Elia. var. histor. § Lacta. lib. 5, c. 6, de fal. relig.

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gustine, Marcus Varro, and others, state the number to be ten—Cumea, Libica, Delphica, Persica, Erithrea, Samia, Cumana, Hellespontica, Phrigia, and Tiburtina.* To these are added two, which are Europa and Egypcia, of whom writes Bernardino de Busto, and other ancient and modern writers. These twelve the Author gives a portrait of, and each are true illustrations of the Sibyls with their individual devices, according to the nature of their prophecies.

Besides these twelve already stated there are others mentioned, such as Mantho, Daphne, daughter of Tirresias, from whose writings it is said Homer robbed a great part of his marvellous poem; Casandra Xenoclea, Melisa, and Lampusa; and Strabo† in his Geography adds many others; but of all these none are taken notice of but the twelve mentioned who bore the distinctive appellation of Sibyls, because in them was perceived the gift of virginity for which cause was imparted to them the gift of prophecy, as is told us by St Jerome, and Constantine the Great,‡ in his Orations on the Christian Religion, quoted by Eusebius in his life.

* D. Hier. lib. 1, advers. Jovini. D. Augus. de civ. Dei, li. 18, cap. 23, et de Trinit. lib. 19.

† Strab. lib. 4, Geograf. ‡ D. Hier. cont. Jovinian.

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And although some Saints say that the Devil spoke through these Sibyls, as we can infer by St Augustine * and St Ambrose in various parts of their works and in the Glossary, I reply that it is true that the Devils frequently spoke through the Sibyls, and by the mouths of their own prophets, but in all that relates to the mysteries of our Redemption, the Sibyls spoke by Divine Revelation, God making use of the bad for the benefit of the good, as St Thomas † writes in the *Secunda Secundæ*. The Saints also experienced evil from many women deceived by the Devil, to whom were falsely ascribed the names of the Sibyls, and from others who were bad Sibyls, as were the false prophets,—this is learnedly declared by John de Horozco and Covarrubias ‡ in his erudite work on *True and False Philosophy*. St Thomas agrees with this doctrine when he writes, that revelation of Christ was made to many of the Gentiles—hence to the Sibyl Erithrea, as being the principal of the Sibyls, St Augustin numbers among those who belong to the City of God.

The books of these Sibyls have been largely discussed and written upon by St Justin Martyr,

* D. Augus. in Epis. in choa. ad. Rom.
† St Thom. 22, p. 72, art. 1, ad. 1.
‡ Covarru. de vend. et fals. Prof., cap. 32.

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St Augustine, St Jerome, Fenestela, Eusebius, Cesariente, Arnobius, Prosperus, Xistus Betuleius, Lanctantius Firmianus.* The Angelic Doctor also speaks of these women where he says that the Sibyls prophesied expressly of Christ our Lord. Besides the Sacred Doctors, many poets speak of the Sibyls, among others Juvenal, who, wishing that credit should be given to his verses, said: "Credite me vobis folium recitare Sibillæ."

Father Canisius,† of the Society of Jesus, says in his book de Beata Virgine, cap. 1, that the Gentiles learnt the name of Our Lady from the Sibyls, for thus said the Sibyl Erithrea in lib. 8 of the Oracles—Et brevis egressus Mariæ Virginis alvo exorta est nova lux.

And the same author says that the Gentiles greatly honoured the Sibyls among the prophets, and considered nothing to be more true, certain, and trustworthy than the oracles of the Sibyls, and then adds these remarkable words‡ :—

* D. Just. lib. contra. Trif. D. Aug. lib. 18, de civit. cap. 22. D. Hieron. cont. Jovin. Fenest. de Quindecim viris. Eusebio, li. 4, de vit. const. Lact. lib. de fals. relig. Prosp. de vita contempl. et lib. 2, predi. cap. 29. Sanct. Tho. 22, qu. 2, art. 7, ad. 3; qu. 12, art. 6, ad. 1.

† Can. de Beate Virg. lib. 1, cap. 1.

‡ Lib. 2, cap. 7.

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"The sayings of the Sibyls must be admitted to be, not novel dreams or ravings of common women, but held as the ancient oracles of the prophets, who were renowned in the first ages of the world, and are worthy of greater esteem by reason that they relate to Christ Our Lord and the evangelical truths, particularly to such as are strangers to piety and accustomed to rites and ceremonies opposed to the Gospel—that they may live holily and happily." Thus far is from Canisius.

Gilbert Genebrardo,* a most learned man, says, that the Romans possessed an oracle of the Sibyls in which is foretold that when Rome should be subjected to a King of Egypt, by some of the Roman people, a Monarch of the Universe would be born. Cicero,† in his first Epistle to the *familiare* to Lentulus, mentions this prophecy, "and whereas King Ptolemy was seduced by Gabinus, the Roman people having discussed and arranged this affair. Christ Our Lord was born soon after." This is said in the Second Book of the Oracles of the Sibyls, written in Greek.

Concerning the antiquity and deeds of the

* Gil. Geneb. . . in Chronolog. . . .
† Cice. in Epis. famil. ad. Lentulum.

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Sibyls there exists many diverse opinions, and it is difficult to find a path in this labyrinth. Lactantius * says that Erithrea is the most ancient of the Sibyls, and affirms that she was daughter-in-law to Noah; she escaped the waters of the Deluge, and lived some hundreds of years. Marcus Varro holds that the Persica was more ancient, while others say the Libica, and there are many authors who attribute to one Sibyl all the prophecies, and to another all the deeds. In truth there is much confusion, but I have endeavoured to follow the clearest and simplest course, and what appears the most certain. The Devils when they endeavoured to trouble them with answers of the false Idols, the Sibyls ceased to speak, and the Idols were struck dumb when the Apostles began to preach, as is related to us by St Theodorus,† and even the Gentiles themselves thus comprehended it, and wrote about it. Thus Juvenal said‡:—

> "Cesent oracula Memphis:
> Sed silvit postquam Reges tinucre futura,
> Et superos vetuere loqui."

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* Lactan. inst. lib. 1, cap. 6, et de ira lib. 1, cap. 22.

† Theod. lib. 10, Grae. effect.

‡ Satyr 6.

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The same was sung by the poet Lucano* in reference to these answers having ceased:—

"Excessere omnes adytis, arisq' ; relictis
Dij, quibus imperium hoc steterat."

And Strabo,† bewailing the Oracle of Delphos, said in his Geography, "Hodie profecta summa in mendicitate est Delphicum oraculum"; that is to say, now is truly impoverished the Oracle Delphos: and Plutarch‡ marvels that the oracle does not reply.

Let us thank God who gave such gifts to simple women, verifying the words of St Paul, "That God hath chosen the weak to confound the strong."

A curious book on the Sibyls was written by Onufrio Panuino,§ of the Order of St Augustine.

Mantuano said of the Sibyls:—

"Indeum annales divini loquarq': Sibillas."
And he likewise called their oracles holy.

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* Lucan. Phar. sal. † Strab. lib. 9.
‡ Plutar. lib. de tract. rerum. 1 ; Chori. 1.
§ Onufr. Panuino.

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THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

(*Translated from the Greek*)

THE PROEM

"O! MORTAL, carnal and vile men, how soon are you puffed up. Not considering that you must die. You do not tremble at, and fear, the supreme God who governs you, who knows, sees, and observes all things, who sent His pleasant Spirit into all things, and made Him the Governor of all mankind. There is one God, who alone reigns: He is very great, Unbegotten, Omnipotent, Invisible: He alone sees all things, but cannot be seen by any mortal; for what flesh can behold the Celestial, True, and Immortal God with his eyes, who lives in Heaven, since men, who are born Mortals, of bones, flesh and veins, cannot steadfastly behold the shining beams of the sun?

"Worship Him who is the only Governor of the World, who alone is from everlasting to

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everlasting. He exists for Himself, is unbegotten; He governs all things, at all times, and (He is in all mortals as a Judge in their common Light, or)* He hath ordained a Judgment for all men in one common day.

"Ye shall be punished justly for your evil designs, when you leave the true and eternal God, and do not honour Him by offering holy Hecatombs to Him. But you offer sacrifice to Demons which are in the invisible World. You walk in pride and madness, leaving the straight way; you wander through rocky and thorny paths. O vain men! cease to wander in Darkness and a black, obscure night, but leave this darkness and enter into light. Behold He is manifest to all, and is no deceiver. Come therefore and do not pursue this dark and tempestuous way any longer, behold the pleasant light of the sun shines gloriously. Know, and wisely consider it, there is one God who gives Rain and Winds; He causes Earthquakes, Thunders, Famines, Plagues, Snow, Ice, and such grievous calamities. But why do I reckon up every particular? He commands in Heaven, and governs in the Earth, and really exists.

"If anything be begotten, it is liable to be

* A defect in the copy here.

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corrupted also. A God cannot be formed of the parts of a man and a woman. But there is only one supreme God, who hath created Heaven, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the fruitful Earth, and the swelling waves of the Sea, the Mountains full of Woods, and the eternal Streams of the Fountains. He produces an innumerable quantity of fish in the Waters, and He nourisheth the creeping creatures with a cool diet. And He gives to the swift birds of various kinds harsh or pleasant notes, and to cut the air with their noisy wings; and He hath put the wild beasts in the hills, covered with wood, and hath subjugated all beasts to mankind; but hath made man His peculiar workmanship, the governor of all things, and hath subjected to him many various creatures which he cannot comprehend, for what mortal man can know all things? But he only knows Him that made them in the beginning, who is the incorruptible and Eternal Creator, living in Heaven, who gives to all good men a very great reward, but is angry with the unjust and wicked, and punishes them by wars, plagues, and extraordinary calamities. O men! why do you vainly exalt yourselves and rebel against God, and are therefore utterly destroyed? Be ashamed to esteem cats and brutes as Gods. Is

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not this plain madness, Fury, or stupidity of mind? Your gods steal cattle, and make a prey of Cups; they who ought to inhabit the rich and glorious Heavens, appear to be eaten with worms, and covered all over with spiders' webs. O you fools! You worship Serpents, Dogs, and Cats, and you adore Birds, and the creeping creatures in the earth, and images of polished stone, and statues made with hands, and also heaps of earth or sepulchres, which are made in the ways, and you worship, besides these, many other vain things, which it is shame to mention. These are the false gods of foolish men, and from their mouth deadly poison distils. But to Him alone we ought to submit ourselves, and follow the way of eternal righteousness, who has the Power of life, and of incorruptible and eternal light, and can give to men joys exceeding all the sweetness of Honey. But you have forsaken all these; you have drank a cup full of the unmixt wine of God's vengeance, which is very strong and thick, by your madness and folly, neither are you willing to become sober and sound in your minds, to know the true God and King whose Providence is over all things. Wherefore the burning of a vivid fire shall seize on you, and you shall burn in flames continually, for ever, and be ashamed of your

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unprofitable, false Idols: but they who worship the true and eternal God shall inherit life. They shall possess the flourishing Garden of Paradise, and there feast on the sweet Bread which comes from the Starry Skies."

Book II. or III.

"But after that *Rome* shall govern *Egypt*, uniting it to the empire. Then the Great Kingdom of the Immortal King shall appear amongst men, and a holy King shall come who shall govern all the World for all ages of time to come; and then the inevitable anger of the *Latins* shall thrice destroy Rome by a miserable fate; and all men shall be destroyed in their own houses, when the River of Fire shall descend from heaven. O me miserable! when that day shall come, and the judgment of the immortal God, the great King!"*

"Why do you now build Cities? and adorn them all with Temples, places for racing, Market places, Statues gilt or carved, or covered with silver, or made of stone, that you may come to that sad day? For it shall come when the smell of brimstone descends amongst all men.

* This oracle is a plain prediction of the coming of Christ and of His Kingdom.

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"But I will declare particularly in how many Cities men shall suffer Calamities. [Some dislocation or defect here.]

"But (this shall be) when the threats of the Great God are accomplished, with which He once threatened the men 'who built the Tower in the Country of Assyria; then all spoke the same speech, and seemed to design to ascend as high as the stars; then the Immortal God sent violent Storms, and when the wind had overthrown the great high Tower, and had excited a mutual Contention amongst them, men thereupon gave to that City the name of Babylon; but after the Tower was fallen and the speech of men differed in all sorts of words, then was all the earth divided, and filled with different Kings.' And then (were those threats to be accomplished when) the tenth generation of mankind should arise, viz.: From the time of the Flood came on the first men, and *Saturn* and *Titan* and *Japetus* lived, whom men called the excellent Son of the Earth and of Heaven by giving them the name from the Earth and Heaven, because they were the most excellent of all men.*

* This seems to be the order and meaning of this famous passage, which the copies do somewhat differ about; and in that case it needs no explication, it is so easy.

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"Now when my mind had ceased from delivering this Divine Dream in Verse, and I had entreated the great Father to cease from forcing me, the Voice of the great God came again into my soul, and commanded me to prophesy through every country, and to tell what shall come to pass to the Kings hereafter. And this thing the Immortal God first put into my mind to speak; how many sad Calamities He had prepared for *Babylon*, because they had destroyed His great Temple.

"Alas! alas! for thee *Babylon*, and the Nation of the *Assyrians!* a howling Noise shall pass through that land of Sinners, and the shouts of men for Victory, and the stroke of the great God, who is the Author of my Oracle, shall destroy all the Country; for Vengeance shall come on thee, O *Babylon*, from the air above; and an eternal fury shall descend from the Holy Places in Heaven upon thee, and shall destroy thy children; and then thou shalt be as thou wast at first, as if thou hadst not been born; and then thou shalt be filled with blood; as thou hast formerly spilt the blood of good and holy men which now cries to the high heavens."*

* This oracle clearly belongs to the destruction of the Babylonian Monarchy by Cyrus the Persian.

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"O Egypt! a terrible great slaughter shall befall thee, which thou didst hope will never befall thee. A sword shall pass through the midst of thy lands, and dispersion, and death, and famine shall follow. But in the seventh Generation of the Kings thou shalt have rest.*

"Wo to thee, O Land of Gog and Magog, lying between the Ethiopian Rivers! How great an effusion of Blood shalt thou receive! And men shall call thee the House of Judgment; and thy well-watered land shall drink black blood.

"Alas for thee, O Libya! Alas for thee, O sea and Land in the Western Nations! How shall you come to the miserable day! You shall come exercised in a conflict which will be terrible and difficult, you shall have a fearful Judgment again, and you all shall come to destruction because you have destroyed the great Temple of the Immortal God; grievously grinding it as it were with iron teeth: for this cause thou shalt see thy land filled with dead bodies, some slain in War, and all the force of evil spirits, by Famine and Plague, and by enemies of a barbarous fury. All thy land shall become a desert, and thy Cities be forsaken.

* This belongs clearly to Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, and its revolt afterwards under Darius Nothus.

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

"In the West a star shall shine, which is called Comet, and is a sign of War, Famine, and death by Plague, and of the Slaughter of great commanders and noblemen, and there shall be other great signs among men: for the Meaotic Lake and deep Tanais shall not continue their flux of waters; and there shall be ploughed land in its channel; but the currents shall become innumerable. There shall be great openings of the Earth, and vast Caverns shall appear, and men with their cities shall be swallowed up. These cities shall be overthrown in Asia, Jassis Cerbe, Pandonic, Colophos, Ephesus, Nicea, Antiochia, Tanagra, Sinope, Smyrna, Marus; and these towns in Europe, Cyagra, Clitus, Basilis, Merope, Antigone, Magnesia, Mycene, Pantheia, wealthy Gaza Hierapolis and Astipalei.

"Then know thou that the pernicious People of Egypt are near destruction, and then the last year will be over with the Alexandrians. When Rome hath received the tribute of Asia, Asia shall receive thrice as much money again from Rome, and shall pay the same pernicious injury to it. And as many as have served the Italian families of those which came from Asia, twenty times as many shall the slaves in Asia, and the

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THE NEW
ATLANTIS

Italians shall be punished with an infinite poverty." *

"O luxurious rich Virgin, the offspring (or daughter) of Latin Rome! being intoxicated by many celebrated Nuptials, thou, who art a servant, shalt not be married to the World; thy mistress often cuts off thy delicate hair, inflicting punishment on thee; she throws thee from heaven to the Earth, and raises thee from Earth to heaven again, because thy inhabitants live unjust and wicked lives.

"Samos shall become an heap of sand, and Delos shall disappear, Rome shall become a Village, and all things predicted shall come to pass." †

"And there shall be no mention of vindicating the destruction of Smyrna, but only by the ill Counsels and wickedness of the Governors.

"Peace and tranquillity shall happen to the Countries in Asia; then Europe shall be happy, the Seasons shall be settled, fruitful, without any tempest or toil, producing all things, as birds

* This oracle seems to belong to the Holy War, when Rome and the West left vast treasures, and lost vast armies in Asia.

† The former branches of this oracle are observed by Tertullian to have been fulfilled since the rise of Constantinople and the defence of the Emperor from Rome.

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and creeping things on the Earth. That man or woman is happy who comes to that time; he will be happy like the unconcerned Countryman; all manner of just laws shall descend from Heaven amongst men, and just administration shall accompany them, and sound concord, which of all things is most beneficial to men; with Love, Faith, Hospitality; but ill laws, Reproach, Envy, Anger, Madness, Poverty, Violence, Slaughter, pernicious Contentions, fatal quarrels, thefts in the night, and every evil thing that men avoid in those times." *

"But Macedonia shall bring a great damage upon Asia. A great mischief shall befall Europe from the breed of Saturn, and the offspring of a spurious Servant; and they shall conquer strong Babylon: and when of all countries which the sun shines on, she has been called Queen, she shall be destroyed by extraordinary ruin, and shall not give laws to her wandering Posterity." †

"But in time there shall come a perfidious man into the happy country of Asia, being clothed in purple garments: he will be cruel, of

* I doubt whether this oracle has yet been fulfilled, only it will certainly be fulfilled towards the end of the world.

† Perhaps this oracle may belong to the Saracens.

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strange manners, of a hot, fiery temper; a flash of lightning leads him. All Asia shall undergo an hard yoke, and that land shall drink much blood which will be shed on it.

"His generation shall be destroyed by the generation of those whose generation he would have destroyed." *

"He shall leave one root which a Warrior shall destroy, and shall cut off the warlike Father of the Royal Stock, and shall plant another plant near the ten Horns. But as soon as he hath taken care of Ida, which was utterly destroyed, then he shall perish by the sons of them who conspire in the same fate of war, and then the Horn planted near the ten shall reign." †

"And there shall be a sign to fruitful Phrygia, when the corrupt Stock of Rhea shall flourish, with prosperous and well-watered roots, and make a perpetual inundation. The Aliseis in the City Autandros, a country oft shaken with Earthquakes, shall be utterly destroyed in one night. Which City was called Dorileaum, in old black Phrygia an unfortunate Country. This will open

* This oracle perhaps may belong to the Turks.

† Perhaps this oracle, which is confused in the MSS., may belong to the Turks also, and the last part of it to the Ottoman Family at Constantinople.

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the Caves of the Earth and throw down the walls of Cities. These Earthquakes will be signs of evils to come, and the beginning of them." *

"The first calamities of the Pamphylian war shall then happen, and then shall be spilt the noble blood of the Old Æneads, and they shall again be made a prey to men at law.

"O Troy! I pity thee! For in Sparta a fury shall flourish as a Plant most beautiful and famous, and shall occasion various mysteries. Yes, various mysteries in the Countries of Europe and Asia, but chiefly to thee! She shall bring mourning, and sighs, and lamentations, and she shall have everlasting fame amongst Posterity. And then an old lying writer shall appear in that time again, counterfeiting his Country; being also dim-sighted, he shall have much wit and Eloquence, and shall compose wise Poems made of two parts, and he shall say he was born at Chios. Then he shall write the History of Troy, not just as things are, but plainly, and according to my words, and he shall use the same words, and he shall use the same verse. He shall be the first that shall celebrate my book with his

* This oracle seems also to belong to the Turks, and the beginning of the Ottoman devastations, when happened one of the greatest earthquakes that ever was.

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hands; he shall much adorn the Commanders in the war by his praise. Priamus, son of Hector, and Achilles the son of Peleus, and all others who are famous in war, and he shall make the Gods to assist them, writing falsely in everything. Spacious Troy shall give reputation to those who died as mortal men, but he shall describe the actions on both sides alternately."*

"And the progeny of the Locrian shall do much mischief to Lycia; and an Æolian shall come to Chalcedon and depopulate it, being seated on the narrow passage of the Sea; and the Sea (or Pontus) shall carry off the great Riches, O Cyzicus! Thou Byzantium shalt encourage the war in Asia, thou also shalt have sighs and much blood; and the great Strength of Lycia shall be from the height of the mountains. And the waters shall flow from the opening of the Rock till the prophetic signs of the Fathers shall cease. O Cyzicus! inhabiting the Propontis where wines grow, Rhyndacus shall resound about thee with swollen waves; and thou Rhodes shalt be free for a long time from slavery. O

* This oracle plainly belongs to the siege of Troy and to Homer's poems; though I suspect at least part of its latter branch not to be original. However, it is very old, and part of it much referred to by the ancient heathen writers.

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Daughter of the day! thou shalt obtain much riches afterwards, and thou shalt have a more excellent command in the Sea than any others: but at length thou shalt become a prey to men, that are thy lovers for thy beauty and riches, they shall put a grievous Yoke upon thy neck." *

"But the Lydian Commotions shall spoil the affairs of Persia, and all Asia and Europe shall horribly suffer by them. But the Sidonian pernicious King, and the war of his other confederates shall bring a miserable destruction on the Samians by their great ships, and the Earth shall resound with a great noise, for the destruction of the men which perish in the Sea; and the wives with the damsels in splendid garments shall beat their breasts for the ancient abuses that are offered them. These shall lament their dead, and the others their children slain. This shall be the Prodigy in Cyprus which by an earthquake shall destroy the troops, and the other world shall gain a great many souls all together. Trallis, that is near Ephesus, shall lose its well-built walls by an earthquake; these were built by pernicious men of a great spirit.

"Then the earth shall produce boiling waters,

* This oracle is clear, and has been remarkably fulfilled by the Turk's conquest of Rhodes.

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and by its weight falling in shall drink up the same, but there shall remain a smell of sulphur. And Samoa at a season shall build Royal Houses.

"O Italy! thou shalt have no foreign war, but effusion of blood amongst thy own nation shall severely afflict thee, who are very famous and impudent. That part which is extended near the hot Baths shall destroy itself by those things which it foresaw would come to pass. Thou shalt be a Mother, but not of the good, and a Nurse of wild beasts. Another pernicious Man shall come from Italy also. Then Laodicea (a splendid city of the Carians on the Banks of the divine river Lycus) shall be thrown down. Thou shalt become silent and no more lament thy magnanimous Parent. The Acrobuzian Thracians shall be placed in other winds. The Arabian shall be in Campania, because of the extraordinary famine; but when she is old she shall lament her parent Cyrnus, and Sardo shall sink into the bottom of the sea by the storms of winter, and by the strokes of the Holy God with their marine offspring. Alas! alas! how many young men shall be wedded to the other world-land, how many young men shall she bury without obsequies! Alas! alas! for the

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children swimming in the sea, and the abundance of the Riches there lost. The happy land of the Mysian shall suddenly raise a princely stock. But Carthage shall not continue long; and the Galatians shall have much mourning; and Tenedos shall have the last but greatest mischief; and Sicyon shall boast in the howling of prayer instruments, and so shall Corinth; yet over all the Pipe shall equally sound.*

"But when my mind had ceased from my divine hymn, the Word of the Great God came again into my breast, and commanded me to prophesy concerning every land. Alas! alas! for Phœnicia, both men and women, and for all the Cities on the Sea Coast, for not one of you shall be in being under the Sun; nor shall they have any number of Years, nor Tribes, because of their deceitful tongues. And their wicked, impure lives which they all lived; and spake terrible, false, and unjust words with their impure Mouths, and they opposed God the great King, and spake falsely with their wicked mouths; for which cause they shall be tamed by a horrible slaughter more than any other land; once God

* The time of these desolations being here not clearly set down, it is hard to determine about all their completions, though some of them have evidently been fulfilled.

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shall send them a miserable fate, burning their Cities to the ground, with their numerous Foundations. Alas! alas! O Crete, thou must suffer many troubles; a judgment shall happen to thee which shall be a horrible and everlasting overthrow; and all the Earth shall again behold thy burning; and the fire shall not leave thee forever, but thy burning shall continue. Alas! alas! for thee Thrace, because thou shalt come under a servile Yoke, when the Galatians mixt with the Dardanidæ shall violently waste Greece and thou shalt suffer mischief! thou shalt do injury to other countries, and receive the same thyself. Alas! alas! for the Gog and all the other in order, with Magog, Margoge and Augon, how many ill Fates will attend thee? Many will attend the People of Lysia, Mysia, Phrygia, and not a few of the Pamphylian and Lydian Nations, the Moors, Æthiopians, and other Nations of a barbarous Language. The Cappadocians and Arabians shall fall. But why do I relate all the particulars? For the Highest will send a terrible Judgment on all the Nations who inhabit the Earth.*

* The time of these desolations being here not distinctly set down, it is hard to determine about their completion; perhaps they belong to the Turkish devastation, or to the final consummation of things.

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"But when a most barbarous Nation shall come into Greece, it shall destroy many great Men; and many fat Cattle of the inhabitants, the Horses and Mules and herds of bellowing Oxen, and unjustly burn the well-built Houses, and by force carry away many Slaves into another land. And Children and well-cloathed Women who were tenderly kept out of their Chambers; who will fall down through the delicate tenderness of their feet; they shall see them in Fetters under their barbarous Enemies, suffering all manner of cruel reproach. And there shall be none to help them in war, or defend their lives; but they shall see their Enemies enjoying all their possessions, and all their wealth. Their Knees shall tremble; a hundred shall fly, and one shall destroy them all; five Men shall excite a great Rage, but they shall shamefully manage the fight, and raise a terrible tumult, only to give joy to their enemies, and grief to the Grecians. And all Greece shall be reduced into Slavery and Bondage, and they shall not only suffer all these miseries by war, but by plague also; and God shall make the great and high Heavens like brass, the Earth shall be like iron, not having any rain.

"But all men shall afterwards grievously

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lament their lands, unsown and untilled, and burnt with fire; and God, who made Heaven and Earth, will raise many masts, and the third generation of men shall exist. O Greece! why do you confide in Princes, who are mortal men, who cannot avoid Death? Why do you give vain offerings to the dead, and sacrifice to Idols? Who hath instilled this error into your Minds to do these things and to leave and forsake the Face of the great God? But do you own the Name and Worship of Him who made all things. It is now 1500 years since those proud Kings reigned in Greece, who first led men to their wickednesses to make many Idols of those gods, who are only Corrupt dead Men, for whose sake you were taught to think of such vain things. But when the anger of the great God shall fall on you, then you will acknowledge the Face of the great God; and the souls of all men shall much lament, lifting their hands up to the large Heavens; and they shall begin to call on the great King to help them, and they shall seek who shall be their Deliverer from this great Wrath. But learn this, and keep it in thy mind, how many Miseries shall happen in Greece in the ages to come; and when Greece shall sacrifice Oxen and Bulls at the Temple of the

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great God as Holocausts, it shall escape the noisy War, and Terror, and the Plague, and also be delivered from Bondage and Slavery again.

"But the generation of wicked Men will remain there till the fatal day of the End of the World shall come upon them unawares; for ye will not sacrifice to God, till all these things shall come to pass. For there is absolute Necessity that all things should be done, which God alone Wills and Decrees should be brought to pass." *

"Then shall arise a holy stock of righteous Men, who will observe the Counsels of the supreme God; who will honour the Temple of the great God; by libations and fumes and holy Hecatombs, with sacrifices of fat Bulls and Rams without blemish, and the first-born of Sheep and fat Lambs; offering them devoutly as holy Hecatombs on the great Altar, and dividing them according to the just law of the Most High. They shall be happy, and shall inhabit Cities and rich lands; they shall be prophets over others by the immortal God, and they shall occasion great Joy to all Men. For the great God has given to them alone wise Counsels, Faith, and an excellent understanding; who do

* This oracle may belong to the conquest of Greece by the Turks, and its slavery under them.

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not worship, through vain errors, the Works of Men, made of gold, brass, silver, or ivory, and the Idols of wood, stone, dead gods, or pictures, drawn to the life by chalk or vermilion, which men worship, who are led by vain counsels. But they lift up to Heaven their pure hands, and every morning when they rise from bed, they purify their skin by washing in water; and worship God, who is always great and immortal, and afterwards their Parents; and they will withal above all Men be mindful of holy Wedlock, neither will they use impure sodomy, as the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Latins, large Greece, and many other Countries, as the Persians, Galatians, and all Asia use, transgressing the holy Laws of the immortal God by many transgressions. For which reason the Immortal will bring upon all men Calamities, Famine, Losses, Grief, Wars, Plagues, and lamentable pains; because they would not honour after an holy manner, the immortal Father of all mankind, but honoured Idols, and worshipped things made by their own hands, which the same men will throw away, and hide them for shame in the clefts of the Rocks." *

* This oracle seems to belong to the Millennium at the end of the world.

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"When a new King of Egypt shall reign the seventh in his own Country, and is reckoned as derived from the Kingdom of the Greeks, which the neighbouring Macedonians shall raise, a great King shall come as a fierce Eagle out of Asia, who shall cover all the Earth with horse and foot, and shall beat down all things and fill all places with misery. And he shall overthrow the Kingdom of Egypt, and carry away all the riches as he departs through the great sea. And then they shall adore on their bare Knees, on the fruitful Earth, the great God and immortal King; and then all the Idols made by mens' hands shall be consumed by fire, and then God shall give great joy to men. For the Earth and the Trees, and vast flocks of Cattle, shall give true increase of wine, and sweet honey, and white milk, and bread corn, which is most acceptable to men."*

"But do thou, O Mortal! of a various and evil mind, leave thy wealth, turn to God and appease Him; sacrifice to God hundreds of bulls,

* The first part of the oracle may be applied to the conquest of Egypt by the Turks under Solymus, A.D. 1517. Macedonia was conquered by Bajarzet the First, and from him Solymus was the seventh Turkish Emperor, and became a new King of Egypt, and carried away its riches in ships to Constantinople.

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and of first-born lambs, and goats, at proper periods; but propitiate the immortal God if He may be moved to be merciful, for He is the only God, and there is not another; and follow righteousness, and do no injury to another, for the Immortal commands these things to poor mortals.

"But do thou avoid the anger of the great God, when a destruction by a Plague shall come upon all men, and they shall be subdued and suffer a terrible punishment, and when one King shall captivate another, and take away his land; and one nation shall destroy another, and the Governors, their People, and all the Princes shall fly into another land and change their native Countries. And a barbarian Empire then ruling shall destroy all Greece, and shall rob that rich land of all its Riches, and shall come against it while they strive about their silver and gold (and then the love of Riches shall do much injury to Cities); in a strange Country they all shall lie unburied, and the vultures and wild beasts of the Earth shall devour their Carcasses. And when all things are done, the large Earth shall consume the reliques of the Dead, and it shall all be unploughed and unsown, by which desolation she will declare the wickedness of innumerable Men.

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"In a great length of Time, in years to come, there shall be no need of Bucklers, Breast-plates, darts, and divers sorts of arms. For neither shall wood be cut from the Oaks to burn." *

"And then God shall send a King from the East, who shall make all the Earth to cease from War, by killing some, and making Leagues with others: and he shall not do all these things by his own Counsel. But confiding in the Decrees of the Great God, which are good. And the People of the Great God shall come loaded with great wealth, Gold and Silver, and Purple Garments, and the Earth shall be full of all Plenty, and the Sea furnished with all good things. And then Kings shall begin to be angry with one another, contriving evil things in their minds. Envy is not proper for miserable Mortals." †

"But the Kings of the Gentiles shall again invade the land with great multitudes, bringing on themselves a fatal destruction; for they will design to destroy the Temple of the Great God and the best men when they come into that

* This oracle seems to be an exhortation to all the Greeks to make a reformation, and to threaten miseries on them if it be not done.

† This oracle is clear for Christ's Second Coming, the restoration of the Jews, and the Millennium thereupon.

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Country. The defiled Princes shall sacrifice round about the City, every one having his throne apart, with his disobedient People. And then God shall speak to all the uninstructed and vain People with a loud voice; and He who is the great God shall judge them, and they shall all perish by the Hand of the Immortal; and fiery swords shall fall from Heaven upon the Earth. And the great lamps of Fire shall come and shine amongst Men; the Earth also, which is the common parent, shall be shaken in those days by the Hand of the Immortal, and the fish in the Sea, and all the wild beasts on the Land, and infinite Flocks of Birds, and all the Souls of Men, and all the Sea shall tremble at the Presence of the Immortal, and be afraid. He shall break upon the high tops of the Mountains, and the vast hills, and the dark place of the Dead shall appear to all, and the airy Caverns in the high Mountains shall be filled with the Dead, and the Rocks shall flow with blood, and many Channels shall fill the plains, and all well-built walls shall fall down upon the Earth, which wicked men built, because they knew not the Law and judgment of the great God. But foolishly lift up their weapons against the Holy Place; and God shall condemn them all to be

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destroyed by War and Slaughter; and fire, and a deluge of rain, and sulphur shall descend from Heaven, and hailstones many and grievous; and the four-footed Beasts shall die: then they shall know the Eternal God who does these things. The Lamentation and the Cry of the men that perish shall come upon the large Earth, and they shall become mute, and be washed in their own blood, and the Earth shall drink the Blood of the Slain, and Wild beasts shall be filled with Flesh." *

"The great Eternal God Himself commanded me to prophesy all these things, and they shall not be in vain, nor imperfect, when He has once put them into my mind; for the Spirit of God is infallible through all the world. Then shall all the Sons of the great God live in quiet about His Temple, and shall rejoice in all these things, which the Creator will give who is the righteous Judge and Monarch. For He alone shall protect them, and greatly assist them, as a wall round them of flaming Fire; they shall be without wars in the Cities, and in their Countries, for the force of evil War shall be gone. He shall

* This oracle seems clearly to belong to the war under Gog in Ezekiel, and the Apocalypse after the Millennium is over.

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be their Defender, who is the Immortal, and the Hand of the Holy shall protect them: And then all the Islands and Cities shall say how much the Immortal loves those men, for all things fight for them, and help them. The Heavens and the Sun moved by God, and the Moon, and the Earth, the Mother of all, shall be moved in those days, and they shall sing a pleasant hymn with their lips: Come let us fall all on the Earth, and entreat the Immortal King, the Great and Eternal God; let us send (oblations) into His Temple, for He is the only Governor; and let us declare the Law of the Supreme God, which is the most Righteous of all the laws that are on the Earth. But we have erred from the Path of the Immortal, and through a foolish Mind have we worshipped Statues made by Men's Hands, the Carved Images of Mortal men; thus shall the Souls of faithful men cry out, Come let all the People of God fall on their faces, let us please God our Father in every House by our Hymns.

"We have gained our enemies' Arms in every land for the length of Seven Years to come, and also the Shield and Breast-plates, and Helmets, and all sorts of Arms, and Bows, and many Arrows or Darts of a wicked invention, for Wood

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shall not be cut off the Oaks for the Fire. But thou O miserable Greece! cease from proud thoughts, and entreat the Immortal Conquerors, and observe and send into this City the people that want Wisdom, who belong to the Holy Land of the Most High. Do not move a Camarina, it is better to let it alone, nor move a panther from his den, lest you suffer injury by it, but abstain. Neither entertain in your breast proud Anger, which provokes you to quarrelling and fighting; but serve the great God, that you may abstain from these things. When this shall be at an end, the great day will come upon good men, the beginning of happy times, for the Earth, which is the producer of all things, shall yield to men the best and infinite Fruit, Corn, Wine, Oil, and the sweet Honey, drink from Heaven, the fruits of Trees, and the Acorns; and fat Cattle, and beasts, and Lambs from lambs, and Kids from Goats; and sweet Fountains shall flow with the whitest milk, and the Cities shall be full of good things, and fields shall be fruitful. And there shall be no sword in the Earth nor warlike Tumult, nor shall the Earth groan any more by an Earthquake; there shall be no Wars nor Drought upon the Earth, nor hail to waste the fruit, but there shall be a great Peace in all

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the Earth. And one King shall live in friendship with another to the End of the World; and the Immortal, who lives in the Heavens adorned with Stars, shall give a Common Law to all men in all the Earth and instruct miserable men what things must be done. For He is the only God, and there is no other beside Him; and He shall burn the fierce strength of men by fire: but follow my counsel in your Minds, quickly fly all unwarrantable worship and serve the living God; avoid Adultery and the confusion of Sodomy, and nourish your Children and do not kill them; for with such Offenders the Immortal will be angry. Then He shall raise a Kingdom for ever over all men, when He hath given a holy Law to the Righteous, to all whom He promised to open the Earth, and the gates of the Blessed, and all joys, and an immortal mind, and eternal cheerfulness. Out of every Country they shall bring Frankincense, and gifts to the Houses of the great God, and there shall be no other House to be enquired for by the Generations of Men that are to come but that which God has given to be honoured by faithful men, for Mortals call Him the Son of the great God. All the paths of the Fields, and rough shores, and high mountains, and the raging Waves of the Sea, shall be easily

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passed and sailed through in those days: for all peace shall happen to the good, through all their land; the prophets of the great God shall take away all Slaughter, for they are the Judges of Mortals, and the righteous Kings, and there shall be just riches for men, for the government of the great God shall be just judgment. Rejoice, O Virgin, and be glad, for He that hath created Heaven and Earth hath given thee eternal Joy; He shall live in thee, and shall be to thee eternal Light.

"The Wolves and Lambs shall eat Herbs together in the Mountains, and the Panthers shall feed together with the Kids, and the Bears shall be kept with the Calves in the same place, and the carnivorous Lion shall eat straw out of the Manger as an Ox, and very young children shall bind them in bonds; and an infirm creature shall affright a wild beast, and dragons shall sleep with Infants, and not hurt them, for the Hand of God shall be over them.

"But I will tell you very clearly the signs whereby you may know when the end of all these things shall happen on the Earth. When swords shall be seen in the night, towards Sun-setting or Sun-rising, in the Starry Heavens, and a dust descends from Heaven suddenly upon all the

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Earth; and the sight of the Sun shall fail in the middle of its course in the Heavens, and the beams of the Moon shall shine, and shall pleasantly come to the Earth with bloody drops. And the Rocks shall give a sign, and in a cloud ye shall see the fight of Horsemen and Footmen like the Crowd made in the hunting of wild beasts: this end God who lives in Heaven will give to war; but all ought to sacrifice to the great King. These things I prophesied to the world concerning God's wrath upon Mortal Men, when I was inspired with a Fury, and I left the high Walls of Babylon in Assyria; and I am a fire sent to Greece to foreshew to men these Divine Enigmas by Prophecies."

Book IV.

"Hear, O you boasting people of Asia and Europe, what most true things I am ready to prophesy; they shall be declared in pleasant verses from my own great mouth, which is not the interpreter of the lies of Phœbus; of him I mean whom vain men call a God, and falsely pretend that he can prophesy! but of the Great God, who is not made by men's hands like the dumb idols hewed out of stone, neither has he a

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house, nor is a stone set up in a temple, dumb and deaf, which is a pernicious scandal to the mercy of Him whom none can see from the Earth, nor measure with their Mortal Eyes, and whom no hand of Mortals made: He sees all men at once, but is seen of none Himself. His is the dark night, the Day, the Sun, Stars and Moon, and the Sea full of Fish, the Land and the Rivers, and the Water of the overflowing Springs, Creatures for food, and showers to produce the fruits of the Earth, the Trees, and Vines, and Olive Trees: this is He who vehemently excites my mind to declare truly to men both things that are present and things that will come hereafter, from the first generation to the eleventh, for He revealed them completely to me. But you, O People, hear the voice of the Sibyl who from her holy mouth speaks these true Prophecies.

Those men shall be happy on the Earth that love the Great God, giving praise to Him before they eat and drink, depending on their Piety to Him, and who avoid all the Idol Temples they see, and their Altars and vain Statues of deaf Stones, which are polluted with the blood of Mankind, and the Sacrifices of four-footed beasts, but have regard to the great glory of the one God; who neither commit Cruel Murders nor

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get great gains by thefts, nor, what is most horrible to be done, have any shameful inclination to Adultery, nor to vile, odious, and loathsome Sodomy. Whose pious life and conversation other men who delight in impudence will not imitate but will deride them with scorn and laughter, and foolishly forge calumnies against them as guilty of those wicked actions which themselves perpetrate: for all Mankind are hard to believe. But when the Judgment shall come both of the world and of men, which God Himself shall execute, judging both the wicked and the righteous, He will send the wicked again into darkness, and then shall they know the great Impiety they have committed; but the righteous shall remain on the fruitful Earth, the Spirit of God giving them life and victuals:—all these things shall be fulfilled in the tenth age."*

"But now I will relate those things which will happen from the first generation.

"First of all, the Assyrians shall govern all men for six ages, reigning over the world from the time that the sea covered the land by the inundation of a Deluge, when the God of Heaven was angry with the cities and with all men. Those

* This oracle is a kind of proem or summary of the contents of the whole book.

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the Medes will supplant, and reign in their throne, but they shall continue only two ages: in which time these things shall happen: there shall be a darkness like that of the night, in the middle of the day, and the stars shall be wanting in the Heavens, and the Circle of the Moon and the Earth shall be moved with a great earthquake, joined with a noise, and shall overthrow many Cities and Works of men, and Islands shall rise from the bottom of the sea. But when the great River Euphrates shall afford an inundation of blood then shall be a grievous fight between the Medes and Persians, and the Medes being conquered by the Persians shall fly over the great River Tigris, and then Persia's power shall be the greatest in all the world, and it shall be a most happy Monarchy for one generation." *

"Then shall those evil deeds be done which all men hate — Fights, Murders, Seditions, and Flights, the subversion of Towers, and insurrection of Cities.

"Then boasting Greece shall sail to the broad Hellespont, and shall make Great Devastations in Asia. But in fruitful Egypt in future

* This oracle belongs to that battle between the Medes and the Persians which is recorded by Herodotus; and the general succession of the Monarchies here agrees in the main with the Bible, and with the best Histories in the world.

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years there shall be a famine and sterility, though it be exceeding fit for the Plough and Corn, and this shall continue there twenty years; when Nile, which makes Egypt abound in Corn, shall in some other place hide its black water under the Earth.*

"A great King shall lift up his spear, and come from Asia to Greece, with innumerable ships; he shall come on foot over the Sea, but shall sail alone on the dry land: whom miserable Africa shall receive when he flies from that war." †

"A fiery torrent shall break forth from Etna and terribly burn all miserable Sicily, and the great City of Men shall fall into the deep sea. And there will be discord in Greece, and when they are enraged against one another they shall destroy many Cities, and kill many by fighting, but the victory shall be doubtful amongst them.

"But when the time of men shall come to the tenth age, then shall the Persians be brought into subjection and slavery, and be terrified.

"But when the Macedonians shall glory in their dominions, then the Thebans shall be

* This twenty years' famine in Egypt is not, I think, mentioned by the Historians.

† This oracle belongs plainly to the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, his defeat there, and his shameful flight thence.

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subdued; the Carians shall inhabit Tyre, and the Tyrians shall perish: then sand shall cover all Samos as the shore, and Delos shall appear no more, but shall entirely vanish; and Babylon shall appear great, but that proves little, and in vain depend upon its unprofitable walls.

The Macedonians shall inhabit Bactra, and all they which inhabit Bactra and Suga shall fly into Greece. There shall be a time in future Ages when Silver-streamed Pyramu, which flows by the shore shall come to the holy island. The Cities of Sybaris and Cyzicus shall fall when the Earth shall spew out water, and cause Earthquakes; and Rhodes shall suffer the last but greatest destruction, nor shall the kingdom of Macedonia always continue. But in the West a great Italian War shall spring, by which the World shall serve and wear the Yoke of the Italians; and O Carthage! every one of thy Towers shall fall to the ground. O miserable Laodicea! an Earthquake shall utterly overturn thee, but shall set thee up again a large City, and thou miserable Corinth shalt see thyself taken. O Lycia! who aboundest in fragrant ointments, the trembling Earth has never yet cast thee down. But thou shall fall with a noise to the Earth, and desire to fly into another Country as a stranger.

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O Armenia! the Italians shall by force subdue thee, who also shall destroy the Great Temple of God.*

"But when they through a foolish Confidence shall cast away all care of Righteousness, and commit a horrible Murder on the Prineans (or about the Temple), then a great King, like a close perfidious Fugitive, shall fly from Italy over the River Euphrates, and this will be when he has committed a horrible wicked murder upon his own Mother: and when he has committed many other Crimes by his wicked hands, then many shall be slain about the holy ground of Rome; while he flies beyond the bounds of his Empire. The terror of the Romans shall come into Syria, who shall burn about the Temple, and slay multitudes of Men in that war, and destroy the large Country of Judea; and then an Earthquake shall destroy Salamos and Paphos, when black water shall disturb the famous Cyprus." †

* The time of these desolations being not distinctly set down here, it is hard to determine about the completion of all these oracles, though some of them have been evidently fulfilled.

† This oracle seems plainly to belong to Nero, and the first persecution: only it implies that he was not slain in Italy, as the report was, but went over to the Parthians, of which the Roman History affords some suspicion; as to Salamos and Paphos, this prediction agrees well to their destruction by an earthquake in the days of Vespasian.

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"But when Fire shall rise out of Clefts in the Italian Earth, and shall rise upwards to Heaven, it shall burn many cities, and kill many men. And the fuliginous Ashes in great quantity shall fill the Air, and drops shall fall from Heaven like Minium; then shall be known the anger of God, because they shall destroy the innocent stock of Righteous men." *

"Then shall come into the West great warlike Contentions; a great and Roman Runagate shall lift up his spear, and pass Euphrates with many myriads of men. Unhappy Antioch; they shall no longer call thee a City, because of thy folly thou shalt fall by the Italian's spears, and then Scytus shall be destroyed by a Plague and cruel war." †

"Alas! alas! O miserable Cyprus! the waves of the broad sea shall destroy thee, when thou art tossed by violent storms; but great

* This oracle agrees very well with the terrible eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79, of which the Histories give a full account. Plutarch observes it as a completion of the Sibyl's prediction.

† This oracle seems to belong to the wars with the barbarous nations, when they began to make irruptions into the West to Trajan's conquest beyond Euphrates; to the terrible earthquake at Antioch when he was there; and at last to the holy war, when Antioch was again taken by the Latins, about the end of the eleventh century.

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riches shall come into Asia, when Rome shall repay twice as much of the Riches which she had laid up in a large Treasury. A grievous Famine shall destroy the Cities of the Carians, which are beautifully built with Towers on the Banks of Maander, when Maander shall hide its black water. But when Righteousness, Faith, and Justice are destroyed by men who give themselves to wicked enterprises, and they shall be guilty of foul injuries, and many other ill things, and none shall vindicate or esteem the Just, but they shall delight in Injustice, and shall unjustly destroy all of them in their rage, polluting their hands with much slaughter; then they shall know that God is no longer patient, but in time will judge and destroy all the generations of mankind by a great Conflagration. Ah, foolish men! repent of these things, and do not provoke the great God to anger of all kinds; but lay aside your weapons, your torments, your murders, and injustice, and with your body in perpetually flowing Rivers, and stretching your hand towards the sky, ask pardon for your actions past, and make amends for your impiety, which has been great, by a pious life; and then God will repent and not destroy you, but cease from His anger again, if you all will follow after piety,

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which is truly honourable in your soul. But if you will not be persuaded by me, O men of an evil heart! but love unrighteousness and receive these advices with a perverse mind, a fire shall come into the world, and these signs shall appear in it, swords, and the sound of a Trumpet when the sun rises, and all the world shall hear a bellowing and vehement Noise, and the Earth shall burn. And after the fire hath destroyed all mankind, and all Cities, and Rivers, and Seas shall be burnt up, then all things shall become soot and ashes; but when all things shall be soot and ashes, and God shall extinguish this immense fire which He had kindled, out of those bones and ashes God shall again form man. And when He hath made them as they were before, then shall the Judgment be; in which God shall act justly, judging the world again, and those men who have lived wickedly, the earth shall cover them, but they who are righteous shall live again on the Earth, God giving the pious spirit and life and sufficient provisions; and then all men shall see themselves. Most happy is that man who shall be in being at that time."*

* This famous oracle is very plain, for the conflagration, resurrection, and renovation of things, is in perfect agreement with the Scripture Prophecies, and is at large quoted in the Apostolical Constitution.

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Book V.

"But why does my sagacious mind suggest these things? O miserable Asia! I now fully lament thee, and the nations of the Ionians, Carians, and rich Lydians. Alas! alas! for Sardis; alas! alas! for the beloved Isles; alas! alas! for the beautiful City of Laodicea: because ye shall be destroyed by Earthquakes, and reduced to ashes: in dark Asia and rich Lydia the Temple of Diana, fixed at Ephesus, shall fall into the sea, by a great Hiatus in the Earthquakes, and thereby be utterly ruined, when the storms drown the ships: then Ephesus being overthrown, shall lament on the shore; and seek her Temple, which shall be no longer inhabited. And then God, who is immortal, and lives in Heaven, being angry shall send from Heaven a fiery storm against the impious, and at that time there shall be summer instead of winter; and this shall happen afterwards to men; for the Omnipotent Thunderer shall destroy all the impudent by Thunder, Lightning, and fiery Thunder-bolts, which shall destroy them who are perverse and wicked, and extirpate them all so that there will remain more dead upon the Earth than there is sand: and Smyrna shall come lamenting their

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own Lycurgus to the fates of Ephesus, and shall perish worse than it.

"But foolish Cuma, with its inspired waters, shall be cast down by the hands of the Gods, of unjust and wicked men: no more shall thy chariot ascend into the sky, but thou shalt remain dead at the Cuman Waters, and then those who remain shall suffer affliction together, when thou shalt have a sign, and shall know for what sufferest, for the People of Cuma are obstinate and an impudent Tribe. Afterwards, when they shall have a Soil naughty and full of Ashes, Lesbos shall be destroyed for ever at Eridanus.

"Alas! alas! for thee Corcyra! a beautiful city! leave off thy Luxury. And thou, Land of Hierapolis, abounding in Riches, thou shalt have the Country which thou hast desired: but it shall be a mournful one, thou shalt be thrown down near the banks of the River Thermodon; and stony Tripolis near the River Maander; and shalt be filled with the night waves on thy shore. The will and providence of God shall destroy thee utterly: The neighbouring Country that desires to have Phœbus [somewhat is here wanting].

"A fiery whirlwind from Heaven shall destroy Miletus the delicate: because it received the

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deceitful Oracle of Phœbus, and the wise counsels of men and their prudent advice."*

"O Father of all! spare the pleasant and fruitful land, great Judea, that we may deliver Thy Laws (for this land God first enriched by His bounty): that it may appear to all men to be the first of all other in Thy favour, and that it may attend to what God hath promised.

"O Isis, the unfortunate Goddess! thou shalt continue at the waters of Nile alone, mad and raging upon the sands of Acheron, and thou shalt no more be remembered through all the Earth.

"And thou Serapis, placed on a Rock, shalt run much, and lie a Monument of Ruin in miserable Egypt; and they in Egypt which desired thee shall all lament thee grievously, even all that have an immortal soul in them; and as many as praise God shall know that thou art nothing.

"And one of the Priests clothed in Linen shall

* These desolations are not here fixed as to time, and so it is difficult to say much about their completion; only that of Cuma and Puteoli in its neighbourhood is taken notice of by Plutarch, as remarkably fulfilled in his day, or not long before, which seems to be as a judgment on it for its idolatry, and the heathen oracles there encouraged, which is here the case of Miletus also, where Apollo had an oracle.

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say, come let us build a true and beautiful Temple for God, come let us change the wicked Laws of our Ancestors, by which they without consideration celebrated Pomps and Feast Days in honour of Gods of Stone and Earth; let us turn our Hearts to praise the Immortal God, who is the Father of all, and the Eternal Governor of all, the most true, the King, the Father and preserver of Souls, the great God, that always exists: and then there shall be a great pure Temple in Egypt, and the people who serve God shall bring their sacrifices to it, and God will enable them to live for ever. But when the Ethiopians shall leave the insolent Tribes of the Triballi, and shall rest there, and plow Egypt as their own, then they shall begin their wickedness, that all things that are to come to pass may be done, for they shall overturn the great Temple in the land of Egypt. Then God shall pour forth his grievous vengeance on them, so as to destroy all the wicked and unrighteous, and there shall be no more long-suffering in that country, because they did not observe the Laws which God gave them." *

* This oracle seems to belong to the conversion of Egypt to Christianity at first, and to his overthrow by Gog, till God executes His vengeance upon him at last also.

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The oracle which was formerly omitted at the beginning of the Third Book.

Afterwards from the *Sebastians* (or Samaritans) *

"Belial shall also come, and do many wonders in the sight of men: he shall raise an appearance of a high Mountain; and of the Sea, once of the great fiery Sun, and of the great splendid Moon, and of the dead rising; but these wonders shall be deceitful, and not complete Miracles. He shall delude many men by them, both the faithful and elect Hebrews, and also wicked men of the Gentiles, who did not hear the Word of God. But when the threats of the great God shall come, and the flaming River, like a torrent, shall fall on the Earth, it shall burn Belial, and all proud men who have believed in him." †

"And then the World shall be ruled by the hand of a Woman, believing her in all things.

"But when a widow shall govern all the world, and cast her gold and silver into the great Sea, and throw also her brass and iron, such as short-

* p. 75.

† This oracle, if genuine, but which I much doubt, seems plainly to belong to Simon Magus, and those primitive antichrists or heretics which succeeded him.

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lived Men use, into the Sea, then all the elements of the World shall become old, like a widow. When God, who lives above, shall roll up the heavens, as a book is rolled up: all the various parts of heaven shall fall on the Earth and Sea: then a Cataract of pernicious fire shall continually flow down, and burn the Earth, the Sea, and the Heavens, and the days; and shall melt all the Creation into one lump, and shall collect it into a pure mass. There shall then be no more the smiling globes of the stars, nor nights, nor mornings, nor many days of care, nor Spring, nor summer, nor Winter, nor autumn, and then the Judgment of the great God shall be revealed in the great age, when all these things are done." *

[Omitted page 10. The beginning is wanting.]

"Oh the navigable Waters, and all the Earth, where the Sun rises and sets! All things shall obey Him who comes into the World again; for the first world experienced His power." †

* This oracle seems plainly to belong to Antichristian Rome, which is styled the great Whore in the Apocalypse, and is afterwards described as reduced to a state of Widowhood, before the end of the World is here plainly described also.

† This oracle clearly relates to Christ's Second Coming at, or after, the destruction of Antichrist.

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[*N.B.*—Those four verses seem to be genuine, and a real branch, if not the very beginning of a new Book, to which the Proem ought to be prefixed; for so it is noted in Opsopœus's Edition, that after the defect, the Book began, or went on, with this oracle, in some MSS.]

"But if the Gods beget children, and still continue immortal, there will be more gods than men, nor will there be room for mortal men to stand upon."

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A COLLECTION OF SUCH ANCIENT TESTIMONIES CONCERNING THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES AS ARE OMITTED BEFORE

(N.B.—*The pages here are those of Opsopœus's Edition of these Oracles.*)

HERACLITUS said that the Sibyl spake with the voice of one that was distracted: but that she spake things that were serious, without ornament, and without deceit; and that, by God's assistance, she continued to speak for a thousand years together.*

Upon Aristophanes's mentioning the Sibyl, his Scholiast says: "There were three Sibyls; the first of whom, as she says in her own verses, was the sister of Apollo; the second was the Erythrean; and the third was the Sardinian Sibyl." †

* Plut. Cur Pyth. non redd. Orac. p. 64.

† In Avibus, p. 103.

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In Plato's Theages, Socrates and Theages are introduced speaking thus: "*Soc.* Tell me what name are we to give to Bacis, and the Sibyl, and our Countryman Amphilytus? *Theag.* Pray what name, Socrates, can we give them, but that of Poetic Prophets." *

Plato, in his Phædrus, speaks thus: "We are partakers of the greatest benefits by the means of enthusiastic Fury, which is bestowed on us by the Divine bounty. For both the Prophetesses which is at Delphi, and the Priestesses at Dodona, when they were subject to that Fury, have been the instruments of a great deal of good to Greece, both publicly and privately, but when they were void of it, have done little or nothing for its advantage. And if we should make mention of the Sibyl and of all others who have had the Divine Faculty of Prophesying, and have rightly foretold a great many events to many persons, we should be too tedious: and say no more than what is universally known already." †

Aristotle in his book says that at Cuma in Italy there is to be seen the subterranean Cavern of the Sibyl, who gave oracles; who, they say,

* P. 56. † P. 56.

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continued a Virgin to an exceeding old age. She was of Erythra, but was said by some of the Italians to be of Cuma, and by some that she was named Melanghrena.

(See another passage of his in the same page.)*

Cicero observes, that whereas the faculties of the mind are affected in two cases without reason and understanding, merely by their own free and unconfined motion, the one in an enthusiastic fury, the other in sleep, the Romans supposing that the divination of Enthusiasm was chiefly discovered in the Sibylline verses, chose ten persons out of the City, and appointed them to be their interpreters.†

And again he says: "Those act without art who are able to foretell future events, not by Reason or conjecture, drawn from signs and observations, but from an emotion of the mind, and a free and unrestrained impetus; which not seldom happens in dreams, and sometimes in such as predict futurities in our enthusiastic rage; as was the case of Bacchis of Boetia; of Epimenides of Crete, and of the Erythrean Sibyl."‡

* P. 59. † P. 119. ‡ P. 119.

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And again: "An influence from the Earth inspired the Prophetess at Delphi, but an influence from nature inspired the Sibyl."*

Lactantius gives us a very particular account from Varro, in these words: "M. Varro, who was not inferior in learning to any of the Latins, or indeed of the Greeks also that ever lived, when in those Books concerning Divine Matters, which he dedicated to Caius Cæsar, who was then Pontifex Maximus, he had made mention of the Quindecimviri, he says that the Sibylline Books did not belong to one Sibyl, but were therefore called by one name of Sibylline, because that all Female Prophetesses were by the Ancients named Sibyls, either from the real name of her of Delphi, or from their publishing the Directions of the Gods; for in the Æolic dialect they called the Gods not so but otherwise, and called their directions as if the word Sibyl signified the direction of the gods."†

Varro added: "Now the Sibyls were in numbers ten, and he enumerated them all in agreement with the testimonies of those Authors who wrote of them distinctly. That the first of them was a Persian, of whom mention is made by Nicanor, who wrote a History of Alexander, King of

* P. 120. † Pp. 129, 132.

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Macedonia; that the second was a Libyan, of whom mention is made by Euripides in his Prologue to Lamico. That the third was of Delphi, whom Chrysippus speaks of in that book which he composed concerning Divination. That the fourth was a Cimmerian in Italy, who is named by Nevius in his Books of the Punic War, and by Piso in his Annals. That the fifth was the Erythræan; of whom Apollodorus of Erythræ affirms that she was of the same City with him; that she foretold to the Greeks, when they went to Iroz, that Iroz should be destroyed, and that Homer should write lies. That the sixth was the Samian of whom Erastosthenes wrote that he found some account of her in the ancient Annals of Samos. That the seventh was the Cuman, whose name was Amathea, but who was named Demophile, or Hierophile by others; and that she it was who brought the nine books to Tarquinius Priscus, the King, and asked three hundred Philippics for them: that the King was so dissatisfied at the greatness of the price, that he laughed at the madness of the woman; that she thereupon burnt three of the books in the King's presence, and yet asked the full price for the remainder. Whereupon the King looked on her as madder

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than before. She then burnt three more; but still asked the same full price, upon which the King was so affected, that he gave her the whole three hundred Philippics for the remaining Books. The number of which was augmented afterward, upon the rebuilding of the Capitol; because those verses, what Sibyl soever was their Author, were collected out of all the Cities both of Italy and Greece, especially those of Erythræ, and were brought to Rome. That the eighth was the Hellespontic, born in the district of Troy at a village called Marpessus, near the Town of Gergithium; who, as Heraclides of Pontus writes, lived in the days of Solon and Cyrus. That the ninth was the Phrygian, who gave out her predictions in Ancyra. That the tenth was the Tiburtine whose name was Albunea, and who is worshipped as a Goddess near the banks of the River Anien; at the downfall of whose waters her Image is said to have been found, with a book in her hand (and whose sacred ornaments the Senate transferred into the Capitol). The verses of all these Sibyls are abroad, and in People's hands; excepting those of the Cumaen, whose books are concealed by the Romans. Nor is it thought lawful for any to look upon them, but for the Quindecimviri.

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Every Sibyl has also a book of her own; which because they are ascribed in general to the Sibyl, are believed to belong to one Woman. They are withal confused, so that one cannot distinguish them, nor tell to which every book distinctly belongs, excepting in the case of the Erythræn who has herself inserted her true name in the beginning of her book, though she owns she was born at Babylon. Moreover we also shall, without distinction, quote the Sibyl in general, whenever we shall have occasion to make use of any of their testimonies. Now all these Sibyls declare there is but one God; and especially the Erythræn, who is esteemed the most famous and noble Sibyl of all the rest; as appears by this, that Fenestella, a most diligent writer, speaking of the Quindecimviri, says: 'When the Capitol was rebuilt, C. Curio, the Consul, referred it to the Senate, that legates might be sent to the Erythræ and seek out the verses of the Sibyl and bring them to Rome; that accordingly, P. Gabinius, M. Octacilius, and L. Valerius were sent, and brought with them to Rome about one thousand verses, which had been transcribed by private persons. Which is the same account we have above had from Varro.'"

And elsewhere Lactantius informs us, that

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not a few, and those great authors, have affirmed that the Sibyls were many in number; as Aristonicus and Appollodorus of Erythræ among the Greeks, Varro and Fenestella among the Latins. All these take notice that the Erythræn was the chief for fame and reputation. Nay, Apollodorus values himself upon it that she was of the same City and people with him. And Fenestella relates withal that Legates were sent to Erythræ by the Senate in order to fetch the Sibyl's verses to Rome; and that the Consuls Curio and Octavius took care they should be laid up in that Capitol, which by the care of Q. Catulus was then rebuilt." *

"When Thebes was taken, the Victors having secured Daphne, the daughter of Tiresias, they devoted her to God, in compliance with a certain Vow they had made, and as the principal of their Spoils. When she was at Delphi, she who was already Mistress of her Father's Skill of Divination equally with himself, augmented that Skill; and being of wonderful natural abilities, she wrote all sorts of Oracles, and those of a different nature. From whom they say that Homer the Poet stole many of her Verses, and adorned his own Poem with them. Now because she was

* Pp. 132, 133.

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frequently inspired, and delivered Oracles they say she was called Sibyl; because in that language to be a Sibyl, and to be inspired, is all one." *

"When you shall have sailed thither, and shall arrive at Cuma, at the Divine Lakes, and the sounding woods of Avernum, you will see the enthusiastic Prophetess, who at the bottom of the grotto sings the Fates of Mankind, and commits her marks and words to loose leaves, and then digests them into Order, and leaves them by themselves in the grotto; where they remain immovable, every one in its place, without admitting any disorder. But as soon as the doors are opened, and the least breath of wind strikes upon them, and thereby the tender leaves are disordered, she never troubles herself to catch hold of them as they fly about the cave, to restore them to their situation, nor join them into a regular Poem. So the Enquirers go their way without success, and are greatly dissatisfied with this Sibyl's Seat." †

"But the pious Æneas goes to those Towers over which great Apollo presides, and to the vast and remote cave of the tremendous Sibyl, into whom Apollo of Delos inspires vast abilities of

* Diodor. Sic. p. 60. † Virgil, pp. 121, 122.

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mind, and discovers future events. There is on the Enbaun Coast a vast Cave cut out of the Rock, into which open a hundred mouths, whence do proceed as many voices; which are the answers of the Sibyl. Æneas was come to the entrance when the Virgin Prophetess said, 'Tis time to pray for revelations: the Divinity, the Divinity is present.' As she spake the words, at the very entrance, her countenance and colour changed, and her hair was disordered; her breast heaved, and her violent passions swelled her: she seemed bigger than ordinary, and her voice appeared to be different from that of Mortals, upon this her immediate seizure by the Divinity. This Cumæn Sibyl did in this language sing after a terrible manner what was very intricate out of her retired cell, and groaned in her cave, involving true events in obscure words."—See Ovid, in p. 123.

"Sicilian Muses, let us sing of events still greater. All are not satisfied with low subjects; and if we sing pastorals, let it be done in such a way as may be worthy of a Consul. The last age of the Cumæn verses is now coming: a great series of ages is now beginning anew. The Virgin herself is now returning: the reign of Saturn is now renewing: a new offspring is now sending down from Heaven. But do you, chaste

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Lucina, favour the birth of this child at whose nativity the Iron Age will end, and the Golden Age will commence over all the world. Your Apollo now reigns. And certainly this honour of the Age, O Pollio, will take its rise under your Consulship: and thence will the famous months begin their Progress. Under this conduct our wicked practices, if the footstep of any such shall remain still, shall be blotted out; and the world cleared from the apprehensions which are caused by them. He shall be admitted to the life of the Gods, and converse with Heroes, and shall be seen by them, and shall rule the peaceable world with his Father's virtues. The Earth shall produce for you, O child, her smaller first-fruits, without toil. The she-goats will come home to you of themselves, with breasts full of milk: nor will the flocks have reason to fear the Lions. In your cradle you shall have flowers for your solace: the serpent shall be destroyed with the poisonous weeds, and the Assyrian sweet-smelling Flower shall grow and become common. However, as soon as you shall be able to read of the praiseworthy actions of the Heroes, and of the acts of your Father, and to know what virtue is, the Fields shall gradually ripen, the red grapes shall hang upon the very

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thorns; and the hard Oak shall sweat Honey-dews. Yet will there be some remains of the old fraud, enough to induce men still to go to Sea in Ships, and to fortify Towns with walls, and to plough the field into Furrows. There will be then another Pilot, and another ship to carry warlike Heroes: there will also be other wars, and another Achilles shall be sent to Troy. But then when you are arrived at a confirmed Age the Pilot shall leave the sea; nor shall merchant ships pass from one Country to another. Every Country shall bring forth all sorts of fruit; there shall be no occasion of Harrows for the soil, or of pruning hooks for the vineyards; the robust Countryman shall have no occasion to Yoke his Oxen any longer. Nor shall Wool stand in need of any adulteration of its native colour: the Rams in the fields shall change the colour of their Fleeces, sometimes into scarlet, and sometimes into safron, and the purple shall spread itself over the Lambs as they are feeding. The unanimous and inflexible Parcæ have decreed it. Let such Ages as these run on: Do you then, O! dearest offspring of the Divinity, and son of Jupiter, now the time is so near, enter upon your most honourable state. Look how the present world, composed of the

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high Heaven, the Earth and the Sea is tottering with its own vast unwieldy bulk! Look, how all things rejoice upon the prospect of this new Age! Oh that the last period of my Age and of my breath might hold out long enough to celebrate your actions!" etc.*

"I do but repeat," says Dionysius of Hallicarnassus, after his account of the Capitoline Sibyls before alleged, pp. 7, 11, 12, 23, 24, "what Terentius Varro has given an account of in his Treatise of Divine Matters." (Note that I omit here some Testimonies already alleged, p. 464, etc.) †

"Moreover the entire coast which is now called Italy was devoted to that God, and called Saturnia by the inhabitants, as one may observe in certain of the Sibylline Books, and in other oracles derived from the Gods."‡

That Æneas and the Trojans came to Italy, all the Roman authors assure us; and so do the Solemnities used in their Sacrifices, and Festivals, as also the Sibylline and Pythic Oracles; and many other indications there are of the same, which no one ought to overlook, or suppose to be figured for its credit only. (See five more passages out of this Dionysius, pp. 468, 469, 470;

* Iclog. IV. † P. 467. ‡ P. 467.

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six out of Plutarch, pp. 471-475, relating to the Capitoline Sibyl; out of Livy, pp. 479, etc.)*

Suidas says, that Herophila, who is the same with the Erythræn Sibyl, the daughter of Theodorus, writes in Epic verse three books of Divination, and came to Rome in the time of the Consuls, as some say; as others, in the time of Tarquin; pretending to give oracles by them. But when she was despised, she burnt two of the books which she had brought with her. However, one that remained was preserved; which was purchased by the Romans at a great price.†

In the time of the Expedition of the Argonauts, the Erythræn Sibyl gave oracles among the Greeks, at which time Tros, the father of Illus and Ganymedes, reigned in Phrigia, p. 495. See there another testimony of Suidas belonging to the Capitoline Sibyl.‡

Strabo says that Sibyl, one of the inspired and prophetic women among the Ancients, was of Erythrea; and there was another such Prophetess as she of the same City in the days of Alexander who was called Athenais.§

And elsewhere, I have, says he, spoken so largely about Ammon, that I shall add but a little more; and it is this, that Divination in general

* Pp. 467, 468. † P. 494. ‡ P. 494. § P. 93.

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and Oracles were among the Ancients in greater honour; whereas they are now in small Reputation. The Romans being satisfied with the Sibylline Oracles, the Tuscan Auguries, and those by entrails, Birds, and by signs from Heaven that the Erythraen Athenais spake about Nobility, that she was like the Ancient Erythraen Sibyl.*

Pliny says: "There was a Divine Power, and a certain most noble Society with the Gods in the Sibyl among women; among men, in Melampus for the Greeks, and in Marcius for the Romans.†

"And elsewhere, indeed I don't wonder that there are statues of the Sibyl by the Forum, although they be three in number: one which they say Pacuvius Taurus, the Ædile of the People, and two which M. Mossala restored."‡

Solinus says: "At Cuma is Sibyl's Chapel, her I mean, who was at Rome in the fiftieth Olympiad, and whose book was consulted by our Pontifices till the days of Cornelius Sylla: for then it was consumed by Fire, together with the Capitol, while the two other Books were burnt by herself, because Tarquinius Superbus offered her a smaller price than she required for

* Pp. 63, 64. † P. 126. ‡ P. 126.

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them. Her Sepulchre remains still in Sicily. Bocchus supposes that the Delphic Sibyl prophesied before the war of Troy, and he makes it plain that Homer inserted many of her verses into his work. Several years after her followed Heriphile Erythrea, and was called Sibyl from the resemblance there was between them in Science. She it was who, among other remarkable things, gave notice long before the thing happened: that the People of Lesbos should lose the dominion of the Sea. So the Series of Chronology proves that the Cuman Sibyl comes after them in the third place."*

Juvenal says, "I commend him for his intention of settling at Cuma, which is now thin of inhabitants; and that he will thereby become one of the Sibyl's Citizens."†

"And elsewhere, what I have just now proposed is not a bare opinion. 'Tis certainly true, I would have you receive it as you would do a leaf of the Sibyls."‡

Plutarch says: "I made the same answer about the Sibylline Oracles. For as we stood over against that Stone which was near the Court, upon which, as the Report goes, the first Sibyl, who came from Helicon, and had been

* Pp. 126, 127. † P. 127. ‡ P. 127.

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brought up by the Muses, sat; (tho' some say she came to Malcon; and that she was the daughter of Lamia, who was herself the daughter of Neptune). Serapion made mention of the verses in which she sung of herself, as tho' she would not cease to divine even when she were dead; but that she would walk about in the Moon; and become that which we call the Face of the Moon, and that she would, as a spirit, intermix herself with the air and become famous for predictions there; that she would transform herself from a body, and become Herbs and such like vegetable matter, for the feeding of the sacred animals, such as should be of various colours and shapes and qualities as to their entrails, from whence would arise the foretelling of future events to men. Upon this Boethus did more openly laugh at such things. But Zous replied, Altho' this be very like to a Fable, yet," etc., etc. (as before, pp. 57, 58).*

"And again, the Sibyls and the Bacchides cast out such uncertain Predictions at random, in a careless manner, and scattered about expressions and descriptions as they came into their heads, of all sorts of calamities and events; some of which when they came to pass by chance, were yet

* Pp. 64, etc.

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falsities when they were spoken, although perhaps they by good fortune really happened afterwards. When Boethus had argued thus, Serapion replied, Your assertion is true, with regard to such events as are spoken of indefinitely and without distinction; such as these, when victory is promised to a General and he overcomes; or when a City is besieged it is foretold that it will be taken, and it is taken. But when the event is not only mentioned, but the manner how, and the time when, and the occasion whereby, and the assistance by whom the event will happen that is foretold, this is not a conjectural guess at what perhaps may be, but the foretelling of an event that will certainly come—we may observe that several proper names are hidden by some other appellation: thus, Herophile, the Erythraen, who was a Prophetess, was called Sibyl."*

Elian says: "There were Four Sibyls, the Erythraen, the Samian, the Egyptian, and the Sardinian. Some say there were six others of them, and that they amounted to ten in all; among which were the Cumaen and the Judean."†

Pausanias says: "There is a prominent stone at Delphi, upon which the inhabitants say a Woman, by name Herophile, by appellation

* Pp. 68, 69, 70, 71. † Pp. 68, 69, 70, 71.

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anciently called Sibyl, stood and chanted her oracles. I have observed that she was as ancient as any other Sibyl whomsoever. The Greeks affirm she was the daughter of Jupiter and Lamia, who was herself the daughter of Neptune; and that she was the first woman who delivered Oracles and Verses; and they say she was named Sibyl by the Africans. But that this Herophile, who was later than the other, appears however to have herself been before the War of Troy. She also signified beforehand in her predictions that Helena should be educated at Sparta for the destruction of Asia and Europe; and that Troy should be taken on her account by the Greeks. The people of Delos make mention of the Hymns of this woman upon Apollo. She calls herself in her Poem not only Herophile, but Diana also; nay, sometimes she says she is the Wife, sometimes the sister and sometimes the daughter, of Apollo. And all this she does in her Enthusiastic Fury and under inspiration, etc. Now the people of Alexandra say that she was the Temple-keeper of Apollo Smintheus, that she was rightly expounding the Dream of Hecuba in her oracles, which we know was fulfilled. This very Sibyl lived the greatest part of her life at Samos, but came to Clarus, a City of the Colophonians, as

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also to Delos and Delphi: to which last place when she came, she stood and chanted upon this stone," etc.*

Stephanus says thus: "Georgis, a City of Troy, from whence sprang the Georgithian Sibyl, that gave oracles; who is engraved, and the Sphinx with her, on the coins of the Georgithians, as Phlegon affirms in his first Olympiad. They say, farther, that Sibyl's sepulchre is in the Temple of Apollo. Merve, a City of Troy, whence came the Erythraen Sibyl, for the colour of the City was red as the word Erythrae implies.

Eustachius, upon Homer, affirms that Arrian said that Dardanus, coming from Samothracia, married Neso and Bateano, the daughters of the King; that by Neso he had Sibyl the Prophetess for his daughter, from whom all the other Prophetic women were called Sibyls; not as being related to her by blood, but as enjoying the name from the resemblance there was between their Divine inspirations.†

Hermias, upon Plato, says: There are such very strange things said of the Sibyls, that one is ready to look upon them to be fables. However, the Sibyls were not a few; all of them embracing the same way of a Prophetic life; and

* P. 72, etc. † Pp. 72, 103.

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for some particular reason it was, probably, that they all chose the appellation of Sibyls. As it was the case of Hermes Trismegistus, who is said to have come into Egypt three times, to remember himself again, and that he was called Hermes as far as the third time. It is also reported that there were several Orphei among the Thracians. 'Tis therefore not improbable that all these women chose to have these appellations on account of some communion or remembrance, since this very Sibyl of Erythra of which we are discoursing was at first called Eriphyle. They say that when she first came out, she foretold by every one's name what should befall them, and delivered it in verse, and that after some time she recovered her human form again.

Suidas has so many and such variety of accounts of the Sibyls, from the several elder authors he transcribed from, and is so large, that I omit them. (See from pp. 104 to 114.)

Cedrenus notes that (besides the Queen of Sheba, whom he reckons among the Sibyls) the Cuma Sibyl was famous under Amaziah the son of Joath, the Samonean under Josias, and the Samian under Darius the son of Abbyagas.*

Agiathas says that it was the common tradi-

* P. 115, 116.

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tion that the Sibyl foretold to Æneas the son of Anchises, when he applied himself to her, all the things which should afterwards befall him.

Jamblicus aims to give an account of the manner of the Delphic Sibyl's delivering her Heathen Oracles, pp. 118, 119; but as his testimony being very late, adds very little to our purpose, I omit it here.

Strabo, quoting two verses now in our Sibylline Oracles, pp. 60-61, *prius*, prefaces it both times thus: "There is an oracle that is said to have been given as follows."* Geog., lib. 1, p. 91; lib. 12, p. 810.

Josephus, the Jew, quotes the genuine Sibyl in these words: "Of this Tower (of Babel) and of the confusion of Languages among Men, Sibyl also makes mention, saying thus: 'When all men were of one language, some of them built a very high Tower, as if they would thereby ascend up to Heaven, but the Gods sent Storms of Wind and overturned the Tower, and gave every one his peculiar language; and for this reason it was that the City was called Babylon.'" Only it is remarkable that in this, and only this, quotation we have the word gods in the plural, and that in this, and only in this, quotation, we have the

* P. 118.

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Sibylline text set down in prose: the occasions of either of which things I shall not here inquire into, because I see no foundation for any satisfaction about them.*

The Apostolical Constitutions quote the Sibyl thus: "If the Gentiles laugh at us, and disbelieve our Scriptures, let at least their own Prophetess Sibyla oblige them to believe, who says thus to them in express words: 'But when all things shall be soot and ashes,' etc., as before, p. 67. 'If, therefore, this Prophetess confesses the Resurrection, and does not deny the restoration of all things, and distinguishes the godly from the ungodly, 'tis in vain for them to deny our doctrine.'" †

The author of the Questions and Answers to the Orthodoxy, among the works of Justin, quotes this, or a parallel place in Clement elsewhere, but now lost in these words: "That the end of the present constitution of things is that Judgment upon the wicked which is to be by Fire, the Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles affirm, as does also that of the Sibyl, according to the quotation of Clement in his Epistle

* Antiq. lib. 1, c. 5, p. 12, etc. Euseb. præp. Evang. lib. 9, c. 15, p. 416.

† Lib. 5, § 7.

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to the Corinthians, Quest. 74, pp. 435 and 436.

"Hermas brings in an angel, saying to him, Who do you think that ancient woman was who gave you the little book? I said, the Sibyl! He replied, you are mistaken, it is not she! Who is it then, sir? said I. He said, the Church of God!"

St Paul himself is introduced in that very old book called . . . as the passage is preserved in Clement of Alexandria, addressing himself thus to the Heathen: "Take, moreover, into your hands the Greek books: consider the Sibyl, how she declares one God, and foretells future events."*

Justin Martyr says thus, in his Cohortation to the Greeks, Edit. Hutchins, § 15, pp. 79, 80, 81: "It is necessary to put you in mind what it is that that very ancient woman, the Sibyl, whom Plato and Aristophanes, and many others mention as one that delivered oracles in verse, teaches you in those oracles concerning only one God. Her words are these:" [then follow three of his quotations already noted, pp. 44, 52; and afterwards more largely, thus—Cohortat.† §§ 39, 40, 41, 42, pp. 124-129]. "You may

* Clem. Stram. VI., p. 636. † Pp. 83, 95.

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early learn the true worship of God in part from the ancient Sibyl, who, from a certain powerful inspiration teaches you by her oracles even such things as seem very near to the doctrine of the Prophets themselves. Now, they say that she came from Babylon, and was the daughter of Berosus, who wrote the Chaldean History, but that, on some occasion or other, she came to Campania, and did there deliver her oracles in a certain city called Cuma, six miles from Baiæ, the place of the Campanian baths. We ourselves saw a certain place, when we were in that city, where we found a vast room hewn out of one rock of stone. It was a surprising sight, and well worthy of the highest admiration. Here it was, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, which came down to them from their ancestors, that she delivered her oracles. They showed us three cisterns hewn out of the same stone, wherein, when they were filled with water, they told us that she bathed, after which she put on her garment, and went into the inmost apartment of the whole room, which itself also was hewn out of the same stone, and that she sat in the middle of the apartment on a high seat or throne, and in this manner delivered her oracles. Now there are many of the several sorts of

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writers who make mention of this Sibyl as of a Prophetess, even Plato himself in his Phædrus. Nay, I believe that it was upon Plato's lighting upon her oracles, that he gives the Deliverers of Oracles the character of Divine Persons: as finding the events which she had anciently foretold to have been really fulfilled afterwards. And on this account it was, that in that discourse which he wrote to Meno, he commended the deliverers of oracles in these words: 'She may very well call those whom we now name givers of oracles, Divine Persons. Those also that are inspired, that have an Enthusiastic Impetus, and are overruled by the Divinity, may be also called divine; while they rightly discover many and great things, without being conscious of what they say.' This was said with a clear and open reference to the oracles of the Sibyls. For it was not with her as with the Poets, who had the ability of correcting their Poems after they were written, and of nicely polishing them to the exactness of poetic measures; but she completed her Prophecies during the time of her inspiration: but when the inspiration was over, the remembrance of what she said and did was gone. And from hence it is that the Sibylline Oracles do not observe all the measures of Epic verses.

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For we ourselves, when we were in that city, were showed by those that went about with us and pointed to us the several places wherein she delivered her prophetic verses, that there was still remaining a Coffin made of brass, wherein her relics were preserved. And among other things, they informed us, that they had heard from their ancestors, that those who received the oracles from her, did often, through unskilfulness, make mistakes as to the accuracy of the numbers; and they affirmed that this was the occasion why some of the verses were so imperfect: viz., that the Prophetess herself, after the impulse and inspiration was over, did not remember what she had said, and that the Notaries fell short of the accuracy of the verses on account of their unskilfulness. Wherefore, it is evident that it was on this account that Plato, when he had regard to these Oracles of the Sibyl, said, as before, concerning such Prophetesses, I mean in this passage: 'While they rightly discover many and great things, without being conscious of what they say.' But then, because (I speak it to you Greeks) the business of true religion is not placed in poetical measures, nor in that learning which is in such great esteem among you, let us now, for the future, lay aside the

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nicety of Measures and of expression; and let us, without farther wrangling about those things, attend to the things themselves which she says; and do you own how great the advantages are which you may receive by her, when she does so plainly and clearly foretell the advent of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who, being that Word of God, whose Power is undivided from Him, took upon Him that human nature which was formed after the image and likeness of God, and recalled to our mind that Religion which was planted among our early Progenitors; which the later generations of men derived from them had forsaken, at the suggestion of the wicked Dæmon, and so had turned them to the worship of those which were no Gods. If, therefore, O you Grecians, you don't prefer some false imagination about your fictitious Gods, before you own Salvation, be advised of this exceeding ancient Sibyl, whose books have, by good fortune, been preserved over all the world, when she instructs you from her powerful inspiration by her oracles, that those that are called Gods are not so, but has plainly and clearly foretold what concerns the (then) future Advent of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the several things which were to be done by Him. For this knowledge will be a

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necessary Preparative to the Understanding of the Predictions of the holy Prophets."

And in his famous first Apology, Edit. Grab. § 27, pp. 38, 39, he has these words: "Moreover, both Sibyl and Hystaspes affirmed that corruptible things were to be consumed by Fire. (See before, p. 66, and again § 59, pp. 87, 88.) By the power of the wicked Demons it has come to pass, that the Penalty of Death has been decreed against those that read the books of Hystaspes or of Sibyl or of the Prophets, that they might affright men that light of them from the knowledge of what is good; but may retain them in a state of Slavery to themselves: which yet at last they have not been able to do, for we do not only procure those Books for our own perusal, but as you see we offer them to your consideration also, as sensible their contents must be agreeable to all men."

Athenagoras Legat says, Edit. De Chair. § 26, pp. 119, 120: "The Sibyl of whom Plato makes mention says, 'And then the tenth generation of Mankind,'" etc.—pp. 10, 11, *prius*.

Theophilus of Antioch reckons the Sibyl among the Prophets for the Greeks, as he does those in Scripture for the Jews,—Ad Autolyc. L. 11, p. 88.

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And elsewhere he quotes a famous passage out of them with this introduction: "The Sibyl declared that confusion of Languages, when she foretold the Punishment that would come upon the world, in these words: "But when the Threats of the Great God," etc., pp. 10, 11, *prius*. And a little after, pp. 112, 113, 114, when he sets down at large the proem which, indeed, so far as it is extant, seems chiefly owing to this citation as not appearing in the ordinary MSS. of the Sibylline Oracles themselves, he prefaces to it in this manner, "And besides the Jewish Prophets, the Sibyl, who was a Prophetess among the Greeks, and the other Gentile Nations, in the very beginning of her Prophecy upbraids Mankind in these words: 'O! Mortal, Carnal and vile men,'" etc., etc., pp. 2, 3, *prius*. And after all concludes: "Now it is plain that these things are true, profitable, right, and amiable among all men."

And soon after, p. 116, he says: "These threatenings for the last day, both Sibyl and the other Prophets have delivered."*

Clement of Alexandria, in his Protepticon, p. 17, when he had cited those verses of the Sibyl in the Proem, "You walk in pride and

* Lib. 11, p. 107.

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madness," etc., etc., pp. 4, 5, *prius*, adds, "This is the advice of the Prophetic, as well as the Poetic Sibyl." And a little after he says, pp. 14, 15, "I will produce the Prophetess Sibylla to inform you": and then he cites those verses, "Which is not Interpreter of Phœbus," etc., pp. 52, 53, *prius*, and those, "O Isis! the unfortunate goddess," etc., pp. 70, 71, *prius*, and those that follow almost immediately, "And thou Serapis," etc., pp. 72, 73, *prius;* and then adds, "But if you will not hear the Prophetess," etc. And a little after, p. 21, "Whence came the son of Gryllus to say so? Was it from that Prophetess of the Hebrews who gave this oracle? For what Flesh can behold," etc., pp. 2, 3, *prius*.

And still later in the same book, pp. 22, 23, "Let us therefore hear the Prophetess, the first Sibyl, chanting out her Song of Salvation. Behold he is manifest to all," etc—pp. 4, 5, etc., *prius;* and then he adds: "It was divinely done of her to resemble Error to Darkness, and the Knowledge of God to the Sun and the Light."

The same Clement, in the first book of his Stromata, gives us this account of the Sibyls, p. 131:—

"Heraclitus says, that the Sibyl appeared to act not by a human but by a divine Power.

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They farther say, that there is shewed a certain stone at Delphi, near the Senate House, upon which stone it is reported that the first Sibyl sat when she was come from Helicon, where she had been brought up by the Muses. But some say that she came from Malea, and was the daughter of Lamia by Sidon. Nay, Serapion says in his Poem, that the Sibyl did not leave off delivering Oracles when she was dead; and that it is a Power derived from her that after her Decease went into the Air, and became the Power of divination by Omens and Sooth-sayings: that her body was turned into Earth, and grew up, as you may suppose, into Herbs; and they write, that all the brute beasts which are upon the place, and feed upon the same, do exactly foretell future events to men by their Entrails; while he imagines that her soul is that Face which appears in the Moon. And so much concerning the Sibyl."* (See pp. 89, 90, *prius*.)

And in the same book afterwards, p. 139: "Nor," says he, "was Moses alone ancienter than Orpheus, but even the Sibyl was so. The Reports, which are not a few, contain things also concerning her Denomination, and concerning those Oracles which are ascribed to her, that

* P. 96.

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she was of Phrygia, and was called Diana, and that when she came to Delphi, she chanted these verses, O Delphi! the worshippers of potent Apollo! I am come to deliver you the Oracles of the great Jupiter, as being angry with my near relation Apollo. There is also another Sibyl called Herophile, both of whom are made mention of by Heraclides Ponticus, in his Book of Oracles. I omit the Egyptian, and the Italian which last inhabited the Carmontal at Rome; whose son was Evander, he who built the Temple of Pan, which was called Lupercal." *

And afterwards in the same Book, p. 144, he says, "With the whole multitude of the Sibyls, the Samian, the Colophonian, the Cumæan, the Erythrean," etc.

Tertullian says thus of the Sibyl; Ad Nation. lib. 11, c. 12, pp. 75, 76: "The Sibyl was Ancienter than all the Heathen Learning; that Sibyl, I mean, who, as a true Prophetess, foretold real Events; and whose words you have put into the mouths of your Prophets for the Dæmons; this woman declares the Stock and Acts of Saturn in Hexameter, to this purpose: In the tenth generation of men, after the Deluge which happened to their forefathers, reigned

* P. 99.

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Saturn and Titan and Jampetus (Japetus), the most potent sons of the Earth and Heaven."

Note.—The testimonies of Origen, Lactantius, and Constantine the Emperor, have been already considered, and need not be here set down. The genuine ones of Eusebius are no more than his setting down that out of Josephus, and one out of Clement of Alexandria. For as for that of Constantine already mentioned, which so many ascribe to Eusebius, it no other way belongs to him than the other parts of the Emperor's writings which occur in his History, or than any other oration occurring in any other history belongs to the historian who sets it down.

Note also, that these few Sibylline verses quoted by Lactantius, are wanting in our present copies; and that no other verses cited by the ancient authors that could well belong to the genuine Sibyls seem to be wholly wanting in our present copies.

"When the Fire comes, there shall be darkness in the black night."

"Hear me, O! ye mortals! an Eternal King shall reign."

FINIS.

Soli Deo omnis laus et gloria.

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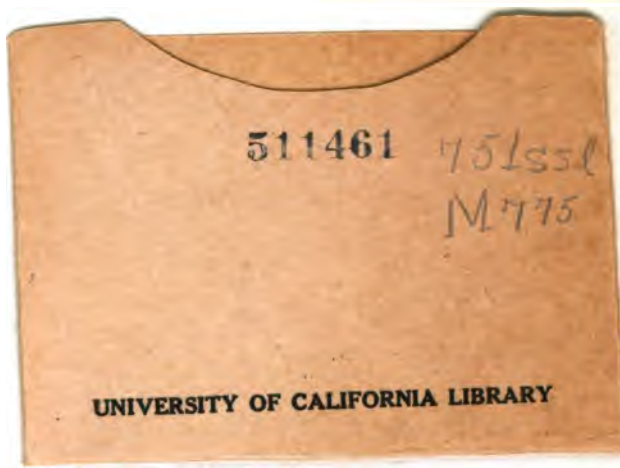

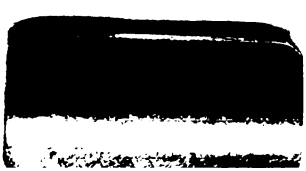

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